

# The Seminole Tribune

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## Oil firm's intentions concern Everglades advocates

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

A Texas oil company wants to build well pads and access roads in a section of the Big Cypress National Preserve in the Everglades to lay the groundwork for new oil exploration. It has advocates of the health of the preserve – opposed to new oil drilling in the area – on alert, including tribal voices.

The Seminole Tribe's Big Cypress Reservation and Trail community, and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians are all located near edges of the preserve, which occupies portions of Collier, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

Fort Worth-based Burnett Oil Co. filed two applications in late January with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to fill in wetlands and build new infrastructure in an area south of Interstate 75.

The requests came just days after the former Trump administration gave the state permitting authority under Section 404 of the federal government's Clean Water Act.

The applications refer specifically to dredging and filling wetlands for well pads and access roads in the Nobles Grade area and in the Tamiami area. The locations are near Raccoon Point, where ExxonMobil discovered oil in 1978.

♦ See EVERGLADES on page 4A



## IRSC honors alumni from tribe

Molly Bartels/Indian River State College

Mary Huff, one of the Seminole Tribe's all-time top athletes, casts the ceremonial first pitch for the Indian River State College softball team Feb. 12 prior to its games against Hillsborough Community College. Huff is an IRSC alumnae and who was a First Team All-Southern Conference pitcher. She is now the head coach of the Okeechobee High School softball team. With Huff are IRSC softball coach Dale Atkinson and catcher Maeghan Branche. IRSC also honored another former student, Brighton Councilman Larry Howard. See page 8A for more photos.

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

## Tribe's vaccine eligibility continues to expand

**HOLLYWOOD** — Shots of the Covid-19 vaccine continued to be distributed across the Seminole Tribe in February and tribal employees began to take advantage of expanded eligibility requirements.

Hundreds of tribal members and employees have received the vaccine since the program began in late December, starting with public safety and health care workers, disabled elders, health clinic patients and those with conditions like diabetes.

After tribal members over 18 years old were offered the voluntary vaccine, eligibility expanded to non-tribal spouses and members of the community that live on reservations – as well as tribal employees. (Nationwide, the vaccine is not given to those under 18).

Tribal employees that wish to receive the vaccine – the two-shot Moderna series – are required to first fill out screening paperwork in order to be placed on a waiting list. Staff from Health and Human Services (HHS) and public safety then makes contact to schedule an appointment for the first shot. The second shot is scheduled 28-days later for a full effectiveness rate of 94.5%.

♦ See VACCINE on page 9A

# Meet Seminole Tribe Fire Rescue's No. 1 and No. 2

## Newly installed Michael C. Mackey, William Huff lead department

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — The Seminole Tribe recently named two new leaders to head its Fire Rescue department.

Michael C. Mackey's first day on the job as fire chief was Sept. 14, while William Huff began his term as deputy chief Sept. 28. The two have been in the fire service in South Florida for many years.

There were big shoes to fill in the department after Donald DiPetrillo died April 30 of Covid-19 at age 70. He had been the chief since 2008 and had worked for fire service in Broward County for almost five decades.

Mackey and Huff report to William Latchford, the executive director of public safety, which includes fire rescue, police and emergency services. Mackey and Huff oversee four fire stations, one each in Hollywood, Big Cypress, Brighton and Immokalee with 129 personnel – although the number fluctuates as the department fills vacancies.



Michael C. Mackey, left, is the newly installed fire chief for Seminole Tribe Fire Rescue. William Huff, right, is the new deputy chief.

Courtesy photo, left/Damon Scott, right

### 'Quite a journey'

Mackey has been in the fire service for 33 years starting at the ripe age 20. Most of it has been in Palm Beach County.

Now 52, he has held almost all the positions and ranks someone in the fire service can acquire – starting out as a firefighter-EMT (emergency medical technician).

"Back then I was the one that did all the (tracheal) intubations, ran all the high index type calls," Mackey said.

He'd advance to battalion chief and division chief of operations over 49 fire stations. He later served as the top administrator in Palm Beach County, overseeing contracts, service agreements, the supply chain, dispatch, fleet issues and maintenance.

"It's been quite a journey," he said.

Mackey retired and then took on a year and a half stint as the fire chief for the city of Lansing, Michigan.

The plan was for he and his family to move there – one of his three daughters had

already been accepted to Michigan State University and the house was sold.

"Things derailed with Covid," Mackey said. "You couldn't be on the campus. It just sort of derailed us in moving and everything got more and more chaotic."

The family would never end up moving and he returned to Florida. Mackey grew up in Miami-Dade County and has lived in Hollywood and Pembroke Pines. In February he was searching for two condos – one for he and his wife of 28 years and one for his daughters.

A friend had mentioned the Seminole Tribe's opening and he quickly applied for it.

"It was like a dream come true. Everything lined up, it was perfect," he said.

Since late December one of the main focuses for Mackey and Huff has been Covid-19 vaccine distribution for the tribe. Fire rescue personnel administer the shots in coordination with Health and Human Services.

"What you see is the smallest portion of what's going on behind the scenes,"

Mackey said. "It's a heavy lift. Our folks are working all hours, calling after we give the shots to see how they're feeling, the whole scheduling, moving the vials, the paperwork. I'm bragging on our folks. We've done a tremendous job."

Normally, the department would be busy with any number of events on the reservations – rodeos, celebrations and cultural gatherings – not to mention the concerts and special events that normally take place at Hard Rock Hollywood.

**'A good team'**

Huff grew up in Miramar and worked in the city's fire department for 30 years, also recently retiring. The 55 year old has lived in Pembroke Pines since 1985.

"I've learned so much about the Seminole Tribe, the culture and the people," Huff said of his still brief stint as deputy chief. "I grew up here and knew about the tribe but not as much about the traditions and customs. My son and I are history buffs, so

it's been a good education for me to learn so much."

Huff said he and Mackey are a lot alike. "We have very similar philosophies, theories and thought processes," he said. "It makes for a good team."

Huff is also married with three children – two sons and a daughter, along with five grandkids.

He's also held many positions in the fire service and has chaired a lot of committees for the Fire Chiefs Association of Broward County.

Huff said he's been close with previous Seminole Fire Rescue chiefs, including DiPetrillo.

"I knew Donald for decades and his brother David and worked closely with those guys throughout the years," Huff said. "It was just devastating – Chief DiPetrillo did so much for us here in Broward County. It was a huge loss."

Huff also praised the tribe's vaccine campaign and said it is one of the most important initiatives he's been a part of in

his career.

"It's not as dramatic as saving someone from a fire or pulling someone from a car, but these guys are saving lives out here with every shot that they give," he said. "It's a lot of hard work, long days, long nights, weekends, holidays – but we're getting there."

Whereas the duo would normally be meeting tribal leaders, elders and members at events, most of the greetings thus far have been through the vaccine process.

"All the tribal members I've met have been so welcoming and appreciative and say hi and give you a big smile and a wave," Huff said.

Mackey and Huff said beyond the vaccine program, they still find time to be involved in the hiring process and in setting goals for the department.

"We're coming in with kind of a blank slate to get things up and running where we'd like to see them and where the tribe wants the department to go," Huff said.

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# Editorial

## Native women like Deb Haaland and Eloise Cobell are the role models Indian Country needs

### • Shannon Ward

As a Native American woman in the business world, role models who looked like me and could talk about my kind of life experiences have been rare. But they've been powerful.

One of the most famous women of power from Indian Country in the modern era, Eloise Cobell, made her name fighting for a \$3.4 billion settlement for Indians against the U.S. Department of the Interior. Genius? The people from the MacArthur Foundation thought so.

Now, one of my other role models, Congresswoman Deb Haaland of New Mexico, has made her name as the choice to actually take over the Department of the Interior.

I met the congresswoman in Albuquerque once, and I was struck by her fierce protectiveness of Indian lands and her frank warmth about her personal life. She's proud of her law degree but is also quick to note she was a single mom still paying off law school debts while running for Congress. Facts to cheer for, from a mom like me trying to promote Indian opportunity as a community development bank executive while also managing my kids' remote zoom schooling.

Congresswoman Haaland has a sharp focus on environmental justice, and now she's going to be the first Native American to lead the Department of the Interior -- for most people in Indian Country, that's a full circle. She exemplifies the idea of Native Americans as stewards of the land. There's a sense of justice.

The Interior oversees 507 million acres of land or about one-fifth of the surface area of the United States. Of course, all of that land was once inhabited or controlled by Native Americans, long before any national government was set up to mark the boundaries. And a key section of the \$20-billion-a-year department is the Bureau of Indian Affairs, one of the most important -- and for a long time -- one of the most despised institutions in the life of Indian Country.

There's so much promise for the

Interior, to protect and improve the lands that all Americans hold so dear. And there's so much bad history with the "old" BIA, from outright theft of Indian lands to notoriously cruel family separations and boarding schools to corrupt agents to promotion of culture-destroying alcohol, to name a few.



Shannon Ward

By the time I worked for Indian Affairs in 2009, guaranteeing loans for Indian-owned businesses and nonprofits, the BIA had transformed for the better. I had the honor of working with talented and driven people who shared the goal of protecting tribes' hard-won, nation-to-nation relationship with the federal government.

That settlement won by a previous heroine, Eloise Cobell was a monumental sign that Native Americans were taking back control of their rights. For decades, the Interior had withheld royalty payments for oil, gas, timber, and other rights legally set aside for Native Americans and tribes. Cobell was treasurer of her Montana Blackfeet Nation tribe when she discovered the foul play. She'd already won a "genius grant" for launching the first U.S. reservation bank owned by a tribe, and she used the grant money to help push suits against Interior's royalty theft.

The landmark lawsuit is forever known as Cobell vs. Salazar. If that other name sounds familiar, it's because the Interior

Secretary of record at the time of the settlement was the honorable Ken Salazar, of the centuries-old San Luis Valley Salazar family, one of the few Hispanics ever elected to the U.S. Senate and only the second Hispanic Interior Secretary. Sometimes the pursuit of equality creates some unusual partners in history.

Eloise Cobell's Blackfeet National Bank sought to expand its model of assisting financial progress in Native American communities by inviting national tribal investors. Native American Bank was formed, and moved to Denver, now owned by 32 tribes and tribal corporations, and where I'm senior vice president and chief lending officer.

Between my Denver home and our bank's Blackfeet roots is my childhood home, just outside the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming where my Northern Arapaho family lives. I wish I could say I grew up knowing all about Eloise Cobell and other leaders like her and every challenge overcome to arrive at this moment. But that kind of pride and learning from elders came later for me.

With the worthy elevation of people like Deb Haaland, young Native American girls won't have to wait to discover role models that look, sound, and think like them. Sometimes people use the word "symbolic" as if that were an insult. This is not. It's a validation.

The importance of moments like this is for Native American children to have role models that make any racial stereotypes they've grown up with a little less powerful, a little less hurtful. They can be overcome.

A cabinet-level appointment like this for a Native American is a validation of tribal sovereignty and assures representation of Indian Country at the highest levels of US government. It lifts the spirits of all of Indian Country.

*Shannon Ward is a member of the Northern Arapaho Tribe and vice president and chief lending officer of Native American Bank, a national, tribal-owned community development bank based in Denver. She graduated from the University of Wyoming. This article was posted Feb. 4 on IndianCountryToday.com.*

## Haaland confirmation appears likely

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

New Mexico Rep. Deb Haaland's confirmation hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to lead the Department of Interior ended Feb. 24 without a vote. Sen. Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, who is the chairman, gave members more time to submit additional questions and Haaland and the White House have more time to respond.

The process could take days or weeks.

Some supporters were worried through two days of hearings -- which included volatile questioning from some Republican senators -- which the historic nomination might be in peril. However, tensions were eased somewhat when Manchin, a moderate Democrat, said he would support the Congresswoman from Laguna Pueblo -- a key vote that could help secure a confirmation along party lines.

When Haaland, a Democrat, was asked why she wanted to become the next secretary of Interior and the first Native American to hold such a post, she referenced the Navajo Code Talkers and their use of the word for "Our Mother" as code for the United States.

"I feel very strongly that sums up what we're dealing with," Haaland, 60, said. "This is all of our country. This is our mother. You've heard the Earth referred to as Mother Earth. It's difficult to not feel obligated to protect this land. And I feel every Indigenous person in the country understands that."

Republican senators had questioned statements Haaland previously made about the fossil fuel industry and fracking on public lands.

But she assured them that the fossil fuel energy would be used for years to come. Haaland also stressed her record of bipartisan work, including a bill that addresses missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. In addition, she often stated that she would work to carry out President Joe Biden's agenda, not her own.

"Being a secretary is far different from being a member of Congress," she said.

Haaland added that she'd be guided by science on the issues that come before her. Indian Country has been almost unanimous in its support of Haaland from the beginning.

"It is time that the ranks of Interior's leaders finally include a voice from the community whose day-to-day lives it impacts most," the National Congress of American Indians said recently in a statement.

Adding to Indian Country's voice has been significant support from current members of Congress, including a powerful former ally, Tom Udall, who said the nomination was "historic and long overdue."

"Instead of criticizing Rep. Haaland's work advocating for New Mexicans and Native American and Indigenous communities, senators should focus on how she leads with empathy to find common ground for all," Udall said in an op-ed for USA Today.

Udall represented New Mexico in the Senate from 2009 until 2021 and in the House of Representatives from 1999 until 2009.

*Editor's note: This is a developing story. Check seminoletribune.org for updates.*



C-SPAN

Interior Secretary nominee Rep. Deb Haaland (D-NM) testifies before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Feb. 23, the first day of her confirmation hearing.

## NCAI intends to engage with new administration

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

One of the priorities this year for the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is to make it known to the new Biden administration that Indian Country is focused on issues of importance to tribal communities.

There are many, including tribal sovereignty, the environment, racial justice and the ongoing pandemic.

NCAI President Fawn Sharp helped to chart the course for the organization at the group's executive council winter session held virtually from Feb. 21 to Feb. 26.

In her State of Indian Nations address, she said she was encouraged by President Joe Biden's actions so far. Sharp also presented a list of demands.

"We now greet a new administration and altered Congress who face a monumental task," Sharp said. "America is at an inflection point with much to heal, repair and recover from. The country must come to terms with the right of sovereign nations to chart their own course, and their rightful place in helping this country meet these challenges."

Sharp said the federal government should allocate an additional \$20 billion in Covid-19 relief funds to Native Americans and give tribal communities flexibility on how the money is spent.

The \$8 billion that was set aside for tribes in the first Covid-19 relief package was widely criticized for a slow and confusing allocation strategy -- one that frustrated tribes so much it was taken to a federal court.

Sharp said tribes should also be given the ability to access doses of the vaccine from the Indian Health Service and through the state. She said tribal vaccination campaigns need more staff, vaccine storage and public education on the vaccine that considers tribal cultures.

"The federal government simply must do better," Sharp said. "The lives of our people and the future of nations are at stake."



Courtesy photo

NCAI President Fawn Sharp

Sharp praised Biden's historic nomination of Deb Haaland to lead the Department of Interior. Haaland is the first Native American nominee to lead the agency and would be the first to hold any cabinet position if confirmed.

"[The Interior] more profoundly impacts the daily lives of Native People than any other federal agency," Sharp said, adding that Haaland would completely transform the department "so that it defers, and not dictates, to tribal nations."

She said another positive was a January memorandum on tribal consultation that the Biden administration issued. It reestablishes guidance from previous administrations for federal agencies to consult regularly with tribes on policies that impact them.

Other actions Sharp praised included Biden's decision to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement, revoke a presidential permit for the Keystone XL Pipeline, a declaration to stop drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the reestablishment of national monuments like Bears Ears in Utah.

On the topics of racial justice and education, Sharp said the U.S. should have a K-12 curriculum that accurately includes Tribal Nations and Peoples and that the country should "finally retire those Indian school mascots that dehumanize us."

## Congress must strengthen women's violence laws on Native lands

### • Patricia Lee Refo

A disturbing incident happened a few years ago at a casino near Tucson.

A female member of the Pascua Yaqui tribe was working at the tribal casino one evening, fixing slot machines, when a group of drunks began harassing her. She ignored the men at first, but when their behavior grew worse, she called security. As the men were being escorted out of the casino, one of them grabbed the woman's genitals and squeezed.

The assault was caught on surveillance video and the employee wanted to press criminal charges, but the tribe could not prosecute. The federal Violence Against Women Act allows Native American tribes to prosecute non-Indians for certain crimes in tribal courts, but only if the victim has a prior relationship with their non-Native attacker.

In this case, the casino employee had never met the assailant before he attacked her. The tribe had to let him go.

Sadly, this type of situation is not unusual. The 2013 re-authorization of the Violence Against Women Act -- better known as VAWA -- was a huge step forward for tribal law enforcement, but it has significant holes that allow violent people who are not tribal members to get away with crimes on Indian reservations and Indian lands.

It is time for Congress to close this gap. Last year, Congress tried to pass an improved version of VAWA, but the effort failed. The new act would have allowed tribes to prosecute non-tribal members

who commit crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, child abuse, elder abuse, sexual violence, stalking and sex trafficking on tribal land. It also would have allowed tribal prosecution for obstruction of justice and assaults against law enforcement and corrections officers in the course of pursuing VAWA crimes.



Patricia Lee Refo

Incredibly, under the current law, a non-Indian could attack a tribal police officer who responds to a crime and walk away with no tribal charges at all. Non-Indians are effectively above the law in Indian country due to the tribes' lack of jurisdiction over them.

This poses a particular threat in Arizona, with our 22 Native American tribes. Arizona has the second-largest population of Native Americans in the country, and the Navajo Nation in northeast Arizona is one of the largest Indian lands in the United States.

The American Bar Association supports a new Violence Against Women Act that recognizes the inherent authority of tribal governments to prosecute non-Indian perpetrators of crimes arising from gender-based violence, while ensuring that due process rights are protected. The ABA also supports expanding VAWA to Alaska native villages. The current act does not apply to native lands in Alaska because Congress in 2013 did not consider them part of "Indian country."

Today there is a new Congress with a new opportunity to empower Native Americans by giving tribal governments greater authority to police their own tribal lands.

Native Americans are victims of violent crime at twice the rate of other populations, and violence against Indian women is particularly troubling. Women on some reservations are murdered at a rate 10 times the national average. Congress has described the rate of violence suffered by Indian women as reaching "epidemic proportions."

It is time for members of Congress to come together to protect victims of violence on native lands. The new Violence Against Women Act will be re-introduced shortly. We urge Congress to pass it in 2021.

*Patricia Lee Refo is president of the American Bar Association and a partner with the law firm Snell & Wilmer in Phoenix. This article was a special to the Arizona Daily Star.*

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# Community



## Land Use commissioners take pride in serving the tribe

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe is responsible for more than 90,000 acres of land on its six reservations throughout the state. In 1985, the Bureau of Indian Affairs gave control of the land to the tribe which has regulated, controlled and enforced occupancy and use of its lands since then.

The tribe's eight-member Land Use Commission reviews requests for leases, permits, easements and other uses on trust land.

Established in 1992, the commission is comprised of two representatives each from Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood and Immokalee who are appointed for two-year terms by Tribal Council. It meets once a month. Since the pandemic began, it has met virtually.

The members of the commission are Claudine Candy Cypress and Daniel Tommie from Big Cypress, Debbie Carter and Richard Osceola from Brighton, Joe Osceola Jr. and Eric Osceola from Hollywood and Jimmy Holdiness and Cassandra Jimmie from Immokalee.

Joe Osceola Jr., who has been on the commission for more than 20 years and serves as chairman, was born in 1948 at Broward General Hospital before the tribe was federally recognized. He and his family lived on what is now the Hollywood Reservation.

"We lived in a chickee with no running water or electricity," he said. "When we got the land in Hollywood it was mostly swamps, that's why they gave it to us. They didn't know it would be like this 100 years later."

He is glad things have changed for the better. New housing projects in Brighton, Big Cypress, Hollywood, Immokalee and Lakeland keep the commission busy.

There are currently more than 1,300 leases, permits and other authorizations for home sites and commercial purposes on tribal trust land. The commission is responsible for

approving or denying requests and is the last step in a longer approval process before it goes to Tribal Council for its consideration.

Most requests are for home site leases, but permits, business site leases, telephone, electric and utility requests also go through the commission. Easements for rights of way for the South Florida Water Management District, Florida Power & Light, internet service providers and set asides for tribal departments or council offices are also reviewed.

Fifty-year home site leases are the most common; once approved, tribal members have two years to build a home in which to live.

"The commissioners have more knowledge of the historical aspect of the reservations they represent," said Jennifer Kolakowski, assistant director of the tribe's real estate department. "We ask for their expertise and guidance. They live on the reservations; we don't. They have so much more insight. Community members go to them for information."

Commissioners learn all about tribal department responsibilities and what they do for tribal members. For example, if a property is in a tribal member's family, the family members must be able to meet the same qualifications as those who are applying for a new home site lease.

Commissioners usually take the lead on issues from their own reservations, but every commissioner is able to ask questions and is ultimately involved in every decision.

"Our job is to make sure all the steps are taken so members are financially ready," said Eric Osceola, who has served on the commission for five years. "They have to have the money to do what they need to do. Back in the day, you could just put a chickee on the property and call it yours. Now you have to have four walls, a floor and all that. The tribe has its own inspectors who adopt the same policies and guidelines as the builders."

Since chickees are cultural; they are allowed to be built without going through the approval process. But the land must



The eight-member Land Use Commission reviews requests for uses on trust land, including the new Lakeland Reservation.

contain a house, so tribal members must be able to get financing if necessary. The real estate department helps tribal members.

"Before, you could get property without being financially ready," Osceola said. "Now with land getting scarcer, it's different. We don't want to stop anyone from getting what they are asking for, but we want to make sure it's fair to everyone."

Jimmy Holdiness has been on the commission since December 2019 and enjoys the job.

"The housing people do all the legwork," he said. "They work really hard and put in a lot of hours. But when people have concerns, they come to me. It's an honor and a privilege to contribute to the tribe's well-being and future endeavors."

Before Daniel Tommie was appointed to the commission about three years ago,

he didn't know much about it, but has since learned a lot. He is proud to represent not only Big Cypress, but the entire tribe.

"The land is precious and we need to take care of it," he said. "First and foremost to me is to make sure everything is done the way it's supposed to be and is fair across the board. Our decisions are not based on favoritism, family or pressure. It helps to voice and make decisions based on that concept."

The newest member of the commission is Cassandra Jimmie, who was appointed in January.

"It's unique in a sense because we are the voice of the people," Jimmie said. "We aren't seen by them, but we speak for them. We may not get recognition for the choices we're making for people, but we are still making choices for them. I'm still learning,

it's all new to me but I can learn quickly."

By the time the requests get to the commission, they have been through a long process. Subsequently, most get approved.

"I can give people the basics of what they will need before they apply, but it has to be fair across the board," Eric Osceola said.

Joe Osceola Jr. has enjoyed witnessing the changes in the tribe, including its increase in size. He said the biggest challenge is getting people qualified for financing.

"The best part of the job is seeing that there are more houses being built to accommodate more tribal members," he said. "The tribe has grown so fast, it's amazing. I'm glad things are going good for the tribe. I've been all over the country and some tribes don't have anything to fall back on. I'm happy that I've seen the tribe come from being nothing to what we have today."

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# Seminole Tribe builds its first Climate Action Plan

BY JILL HORWITZ  
STOF Climate Resiliency Officer

The Climate Action Plan timeline sets in motion an ambitious year of holistic and inclusive planning with departments and tribal members.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida has taken steps toward becoming a leader in climate change planning. The new Climate Resiliency Program will focus on curbing greenhouse gas emissions, understanding climate impacts, and creating a path toward a more sustainable future.

As the tribe's inaugural climate resiliency officer, I am proud to serve the tribe in this important endeavor, and pledge to ensure the program is strongly rooted in community interests, by promoting climate resiliency strategies that utilize both western-based science and traditional ecological knowledge. In this role, I will coordinate research on the immediate and long-term impacts of climate change, engage with tribal members to inform program development, and provide recommendations to leadership on how to protect the assets of the Seminole Tribe and build greater resilience for the

entire community.

The first step is to collectively develop a Climate Action Plan. This is a vital process of relationship building and visioning that will guide subsequent action and investment. Tribal members will be at the heart of goal setting and prioritization of actions. The plan will be the result of a year of dialogue and shared learning, where members agree upon a common vision and set of action steps. Planned activities will aim to attract input from tribal members from all generations and across all STOF reservations.

The Climate Action Plan timeline sets in motion an ambitious year of holistic and inclusive planning with departments and tribal members. In February, I met virtually with community members to listen and learn tribal history, present climate concerns, and Native perspective and priorities. We created our own word cloud to define resilience, using words like survival, sovereignty, responsibility, harmony and justice.

In March, we are surveying tribal members and staff to gauge interest in climate education and training opportunities, rank an individual's level of concern to local climate change impacts, and develop working groups for the Climate Action Plan. Everyone is

encouraged to participate. The site for the survey is: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZVL9NMG>.

The one-year timeline is ambitious, but a holistic and inclusive planning process is never really complete. We will continue to ask questions and identify research needs. We will continue to find gaps and make new connections. We will continue to expand our knowledge, increase our capacity to take action, and give power to the beauty in our dreams. Let us begin.

It is time for the tribe to build and own the Seminole climate story. This process of discovery will not only help create the vision and future outcomes of the Seminole Tribe's realized climate experience, but could potentially inspire other tribal and non-tribal communities around the world as a model for a new approach to adapting to climate change. Blending traditional ecological knowledge and western-based science, STOF may become a leader in developing climate resiliency strategies that actualize the goals of protecting future generations, repairing a broken system of relationships, and healing the land and ecosystems we depend on.

# EPA gives wetlands permitting authority to state

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

The Everglades is a unique ecosystem; there isn't another one like it in the world. Since 1972 it has been protected by the Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act's (CWA) pollution control programs. The CWA made it unlawful to discharge any pollutant into navigable waters unless a permit was obtained.

A major change in obtaining those permits was authorized in December 2020. The EPA gave Florida the responsibility for all permits that allow or deny developers permission to build on the state's 11 million acres of wetlands.

On Dec. 22, 2020, the EPA approved the state's application to take over the CWA Section 404 and handed control of the state's wetlands to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Section 404 regulates the discharge of dredged and fill material into U.S. waters, including wetlands. With the state's assumption of Section 404, permitting authority has been transferred from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to the state DEP.

Florida is only the third state to be granted Section 404 authority; the others are Michigan and New Jersey, who have had it since 1984 and 1994, respectively.

The change could impact the Seminole Tribe since wetlands are inherently a part of the tribe's landscape, history and culture. Although the tribe has been consulting with the EPA for months, the government-to-government consultation protocols giving the tribe adequate notice were not followed.

"We have been talking to the EPA for three years to make sure the tribe is best represented," said Paul Backhouse, senior director and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer with the tribe's Heritage and Environment Resources Office. "We weren't invited to participate in the final part of it. But the tribe will have to adapt to it in the future."

One issue is how the tribe will be consulted in the future on permit applications and how it should proceed. Unlike the federal government, the state is not required to have government-to-government consultations with federally recognized tribes.

"There is a clear defined role of consultation in the EPA of government-to-government," said Kevin Cunniff, director of the Environmental Resource Management

Department. "The tribe wants to be assured that process will be respected and guaranteed. We want to know what will happen if the tribe has an issue with proposed permits, who will resolve it and how that should proceed."

The tribe requested a government-to-government consultation in December to obtain the EPA and the Corps' retained waters list GIS layer map, which defines which waters the Corps will issue 404 permits for and which will be subject to the state's 404 program.

In a letter to the EPA and the Corps, the tribe cited Executive Order 13175, which was issued by President William J. Clinton on Nov. 6, 2000. The order establishes rules for regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of federal policies that have tribal implications, to strengthen the U.S. government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes and to reduce the imposition of unfunded mandates upon Indian tribes. It also recognizes the right of tribes to self-government and to exercise inherent sovereign powers of their members and territory.

However, the tribe never got its rightful government-to-government consultation prior to Section 404 being assumed by the state.

Environmentalists, including the Everglades Coalition group of 60 nonprofit organizations, fear the state's control of the permitting process could lead to more development and population growth. There is also uncertainty that compliance with existing environmental laws, including the Endangered Species Act, would be ensured.

The Miccosukee Tribe of Indians distributed a statement regarding Florida's 404 assumption. It also wasn't granted a specific government-to-government consultation on the state's application to assume 404. In part, the statement reads:

"The Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida continues to have concerns regarding the specific lands that may be subject to assumption by the State of Florida. The Tribe is deeply appalled about the loss of culturally sensitive sites and the potential destruction of the Miccosukee way of life. This way of life is integrally entwined within the Florida Everglades. The Miccosukee retain certain rights in Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve and Water Conservation Area 3 A. Rights guaranteed in federal law."



## Program pays ranchers in Southwest Florida to help Panthers

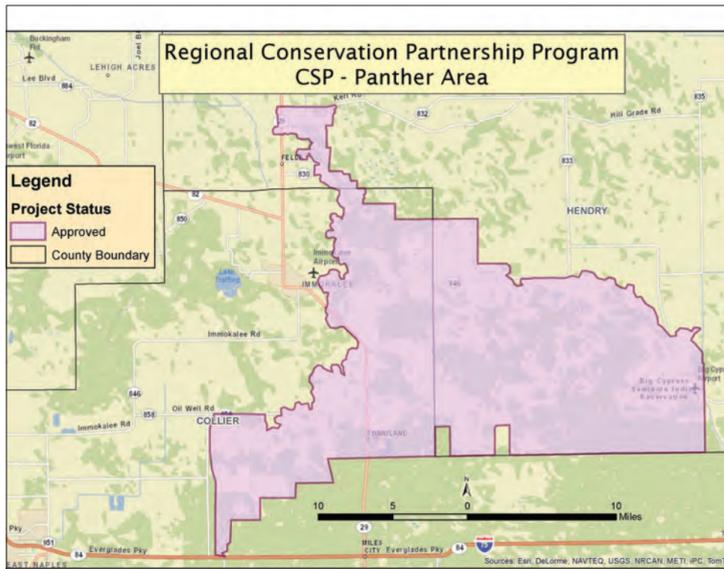
FROM PRESS RELEASE

Ranchers in Southwest Florida may be able to get paid for helping the Florida panther.

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service will provide technical and financial assistance for conservation practices that improve its habitat through the Conservation Stewardship Program. The sign-up deadline is March 26. This is a Regional Conservation Partnership Program project.

To be eligible, a producer's operation must be in northeastern Collier County or southwestern Hendry County, areas identified as essential for the long-term viability of the panther population. Refer to the panther map for details.

For more information call 352-672-2630 or 863-674-5700.



## Department of Interior to hold tribal consultations

STAFF REPORT

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) will host consultations with tribal leaders March 8, 10 and 12 via teleconferences with each of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' 12 regions.

According to DOI, the consultations are aimed to honor and strengthen the nation-to-nation relationship and ensure that White House and Interior efforts at addressing four converging crises – Covid-19, economic security, racial justice and climate change – will include tribal nations' priorities and recommendations.

The consultations open a new chapter with tribal governments following President Biden's Jan. 26 memorandum on tribal consultation and strengthening nation-to-nation relationships. The memo states

that respect for tribal sovereignty and self-governance, fulfilling federal trust and treaty responsibilities and regular consultation with tribal officials are of the utmost priority for the Biden administration.

The schedule for the consultations:  
 March 8 (2-5 p.m.): Great Plains, Midwest and Rocky Mountain Regions  
 March 10 (10 a.m.-1 p.m.): Eastern, Eastern Oklahoma and Southern Plains Regions  
 March 10 (2-5 p.m.): Navajo, Southwest and Western Regions  
 March 12 (2-5 p.m.): Alaska, Northwest and Pacific Regions

The deadline for written comments about the consultation series is March 19 at noon. Comments may be submitted at [consultation@bia.gov](mailto:consultation@bia.gov).

## EVERGLADES From page 1A

Burnett Oil is already familiar with the preserve. It conducted seismic survey activity there in 2017 and 2018 to look for oil.

The nonprofit group Friends of the Everglades claim the survey activity damaged the preserve, "leaving deep scars on the landscape that could have long-term impacts on the preserve's hydrology, vegetation structure and wetland function."

Concerned that more oil drilling is the ultimate goal of the new applications, environmentalists, conservationists, activists and others are encouraging Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to oppose any future drilling permit requests.

Friends of the Everglades held an online event Feb. 25 with Miccosukee activist Houston Cypress of Love the Everglades and representatives from the Natural Resources Defense Council and Center for Biological Diversity.

The panel discussed topics related to the preserve, including its importance to tribal communities, the public water supply, tourism, wildlife and the economy.

"Big Cypress is an area critical for sending fresh water south to Everglades National Park and a crucial habitat for the endangered Florida panther and other imperiled species," Friends of the Everglades said in a statement. "The preserve also acts as a critical carbon sink, and any alterations would threaten to remove a natural first line of defense against rising seas."

### 'Deeply concerned'

Kevin Donaldson, director of real estate services and tribal historic preservation for the Miccosukee Tribe recently told the Miami Herald that the permit applications left members "deeply concerned."

"This area is replete with known cultural sites which cannot be impacted. The tribe is looking at this application closely to fully evaluate the request and ensure that Miccosukee interests are protected and preserved for future generations," Donaldson wrote in an email to the Herald.

A Feb. 5 Herald report said conservation groups have sent a letter to DEP's Secretary Noah Valenstein and to the National Park Service opposing the company's request and complaining about the lack of transparency in the process.

"We became aware of these permit applications as a result of an exploratory search of the Department's new Section 404 permit program database. The website itself lists no public notices regarding any Section 404 permit," representatives from the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, the National Parks Conservation Association and the Center for Biological Diversity wrote in the letter.

As stated in the Herald report, oil exploration in the preserve has taken place since the 1940s. When the preserve was created in 1974, the National Park Service, which manages the area, allowed the Collier family, which owned part of the land, to continue to drill for oil in areas north of

Alligator Alley and east of what is now the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge. A few years later, oil was discovered in an area southwest of the Miccosukee reservation, and new wells were drilled.

The Herald report said that a spokesperson for Burnett said the purpose of the applications is to request access to privately owned mineral prospects "by way of a small limestone pad accessed by single-lane limestone road."

"Based on existing production within the Preserve and new seismic data, we are confident that our proposed wells will be economical and not merely exploratory," the spokesperson said in an email to the Herald.

In the applications the Herald examined, Burnett provides a proposed timeline for exploration plans: begin building the site in December 2021, start drilling in June 2022 and begin production about 12 weeks after that. Production is estimated to last for 30 years, according to the documents.

### 'Keep your drilling in Texas'

Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried, who opposed the state taking over wetlands permitting because it would eliminate federal oversight, criticized the applications.

"I [call] ... to permanently prohibit oil drilling off Florida's coasts, and we don't need drilling in our wetlands, either. These folks can look for oil somewhere else – keep your drilling in Texas, and don't mess with Florida," Fried said in a statement to the Herald.

Meanwhile, last year the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Burnett had caused

damage to sensitive habitats in the preserve, violating the Clean Water Act. The Corps said that the activity had caused "an identifiable individual and cumulative adverse effect on aquatic function." It stated in a letter that any activity by Burnett would need to be approved by the Corps in the future.

But the Herald reported that the Corps later reversed its statement and said it had "engaged with the staff at Big Cypress and re-evaluated all of the current and available

information" related to Burnett's exploratory activities.

The Corps concluded that there was "no clear evidence of any residual adverse effects from Burnett's activities on the hydrology or biology of Big Cypress."

Advocates called the Corps' reversal "suspicious" – in that the agency changed its mind about damage that it had already documented.



Photo by @luisgalfalcon

The western edge of Big Cypress National Preserve is 45 miles west of Miami.

# Big Cypress community enjoys sweet Valentine's Day



**A festive sign greets drivers at the Frank Billie Field Office in Big Cypress for the Valentine's Day drive thru event Feb. 11.**

**Big Cypress council rep special assistant Brian Billie prepares heart-themed gift bags for the Valentine's Day drive thru event.**



**Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum head of security Ellen Batchelor gives a bouquet of flowers to Geraldine Osceola as she drove through the Valentine's Day event.**

**Colby Herrera holds her daughter Nellie Osceola, 1, after they received Valentine's Day gifts in BC.**



**Sydney Cypress holds daughter Emoryelle Everett, 1, after receiving their Valentine's Day goodies.**



**Billy Walker shows his approval as he drives through the Valentine's Day event in Big Cypress. Staff gave out a variety of sweets, flowers and balloons to mark the occasion.**



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# Hard Rock's path to Rockford casino moves forward

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Hard Rock officials presented their vision for a Rockford, Illinois, casino development to the Illinois Gaming Board in late January. It was the latest step toward solidifying a proposed permanent site as well as a temporary one.

If approved, the \$310 million development is expected to bring between 800 and 1,000 permanent jobs once open and 1,200 temporary construction jobs to build it. It would include restaurants and bars, a 1,600-seat entertainment venue, 1,500 slots, 55 tables and a sports book, along with other amenities.

Jon Lucas, Hard Rock's chief operating officer, spearheaded most of the virtual presentation to the board with Dan Fischer of 815 Entertainment LLC, one of Hard Rock's partners on the project.

"The idea of a Hard Rock facility, in partnership with local Rock & Roll Hall of Fame star Rick Nielsen of Cheap Trick, creates a powerful combination that will forever engrain the power of music, entertainment and excitement in this project," Fischer said to the board.

Hard Rock wants the facility to be built at the former Clock Tower Resort and Conference Center site, located at 7801 East State St. near I-90. The proposed casino

site is about seven miles from downtown Rockford, which is located in the northern part of the state.

A temporary site – to be in use for 18 to 24 months while the development is being built – would be at Giovanni's Restaurant and Convention Center on North Bell School Road. It would be a \$65 million investment itself and could be open as soon as 90 days after an approval by the board.

"We are pleased to get this part of the process underway, and we look forward to working with the state of Illinois and the Illinois Gaming Board on the remaining steps," Lucas said in a statement to local NBC affiliate WREX-TV. "We are excited to see this amazing project become a reality, for the city of Rockford, the state of Illinois and the hundreds of jobs it will create from the time we break ground through opening."

Board members originally had until Oct. 28, 2020, to approve the license – however, it granted itself a six-month extension due to complications caused by the pandemic.

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker previously green lighted legislation that provided Hard Rock a casino license for Rockford in June 2019.

The gaming board is now scheduled to meet March 10 and April 21. Until the casino is approved, no construction can happen at the proposed permanent location or the temporary one.



Shinnecock Nation Chairman Bryan Polite speaks at a virtual press conference Feb. 17 announcing plans for the tribe's Shinnecock Casino Hamptons.

## As it moves forward with Long Island casino, Shinnecock Nation praises Seminole Tribe for assistance

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

The Shinnecock Nation announced Feb. 17 it will begin construction of the Shinnecock Casino Hamptons, a 76,000 square-foot Class II casino on the tribe's reservation near Southampton, New York, this summer.

The Seminole Tribe has long been a supporter of the eastern Long Island-based tribe and provided relief after the devastation of Hurricane Sandy in October 2012. The tribe supports the Shinnecock's entry into gaming and has helped it navigate through the process.

The casino will be owned by the Shinnecock Nation, with outside funding and strategic planning from Tri-State Partners of New Jersey, a minority partner in the Seminole Tribe's Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City. However, the Shinnecock Casino Hamptons will not be affiliated with Hard Rock.

The Seminole Tribe issued a statement that read, in part, "The Seminole Tribe supports the efforts of the Shinnecock Nation to secure the right to open a gaming facility to provide the Nation with much needed economic development. Gaming has been a vital tool for economic development and self-determination for Indian tribes across the country, including the Seminole Tribe."

The Seminole Tribe has worked with Shinnecock and Tri-State for more than a year to obtain the necessary approvals from the Department of Interior and the National Indian Gaming Commission. The tribe also provided financial support and technical

assistance to the Nation, including financial models and designs.

During a press conference, Bryan Polite, chairman of the 800-member Shinnecock Nation, thanked the allies of the Shinnecock Nation, including Tri-State Partners and the Seminole Tribe for their invaluable support over the years.

"The Seminoles are a tribe we look to as a role model of how you do it in Indian Country," Polite said. "Their moral and financial support has been invaluable."

and culture of Shinnecock people. We have been sued by individuals and governments time after time. We have been unfairly maligned over the years by forces who would see us extinct. We fight to exist and we are still here. Southampton has grown and prospered while our Nation has endured systematic disenfranchisement. The story of the Shinnecock is one of struggle and perseverance."

The Shinnecock completed a 61-foot tall digital monument on its 900-acre reservation in 2019, which sparked economic growth for the Nation.

In July 2020, NIGC approved a gaming ordinance for the casino. In December, the Shinnecock overwhelmingly voted for the casino and an economic development zone on the reservation.

"[The casino] will yield more income and jobs for the Nation and for the eastern region of Long Island," Polite said. "We will honor the land, preserve our culture and provide for our people."

The casino, on 11 acres of reservation land, will include a bingo hall, 1,000 Class II video terminal games and 30 Texas hold 'em table games. Polite said revenue from the casino will increase the Shinnecock's self-sufficiency and expand tribal government and businesses.

The Shinnecock has been working toward building a casino for more than 20 years.

"We are moving forward on our ancestral lands, that nobody can deny we have the authority to operate a casino," Polite said.



A rendering of the 76,000-square-foot Class II Shinnecock Casino Hamptons, which is scheduled to begin construction this summer and be completed 18 to 24 months later.

Construction of the casino, which is expected to employ between 300 to 400 people, will take about 18 to 24 months.

Polite provided a brief history of his tribe, which was federally recognized in 2010.

"Since 1640 we have extended an open hand to settlers at Southampton," Polite said. "We didn't wage war when they came 381 years ago. We allowed them to farm and survive, we taught them the lay of the land, the flora and fauna of the area and customs



In August 2019, Rockford resident and lead guitarist for the band Cheap Trick, Rick Nielsen, signed autographs at an event to promote the proposed Hard Rock casino.

## Hard Rock AC donates coats



Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City donated 200 coats to the students of Texas Avenue School in Atlantic City on Feb. 10. February already ranked as the fifth-snowiest February on record in New Jersey with more than a week left.

## Native economic summit reschedules for July

PRESS RELEASE

The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (The National Center) announced Feb. 17 that the 35th annual Reservation Economic Summit (RES), originally slated to be held in March, has been rescheduled for July 19-21 at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino. In addition, The National Center has announced a new partnership with the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) and American Indigenous Business Leaders (AIBL) that will allow participants the chance to register for and attend all three events. RES—the largest and longest running national American Indian business event in the nation—joins forces with NIGA and AIBL in the spirit of resiliency and reinvention to support economic development in Indian Country across all industries.

The National Center is moving forward with a hybrid format that will include a live in-person and live virtual experience available to attendees. The National Center

will be following Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and local health guidelines for in-person attendees. RES is the event to attend for high-caliber networking, winning teaming opportunities, business development sessions, and one-on-one consulting all centered around the American Indian Enterprise.

NIGA's annual tradeshow and convention serves to deliver new insights and strategies for operators providing them access to industry leaders and cutting-edge trends in order to help them generate new revenues to support their local communities. This goal closely aligns with RES, which features high-caliber networking, business matchmaking, business development sessions, and one-on-one consulting, as well as the partnership with AIBL, which features their Business Plan Competition for High School and College students, all centered around the growth and development of American Indian Enterprise.

For more information and to register visit [res.ncaied.org](http://res.ncaied.org).

## Hard Rock delivers millions in bonuses to employees

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

It's been a tough and uncertain time for casino and hospitality workers over the last 12 months. The pandemic has ravaged the industry and employees who kept their jobs showed up to work through a lot of enhanced health and safety guidelines.

In short, there have been a lot of hoops to jump through to keep guests happy and safe.

Leaders of Hard Rock International (HRI) took notice of the dedication and recently delivered bonuses to thousands of its employees in recognition of the hard work.

"Many employees were very concerned with coming to work, especially during the early days of Covid," Jim Allen, HRI chairman and Seminole Gaming CEO, said in a recent Yahoo! Finance interview. "So, it really is a thank-you and about them being a long-term member of the Hard Rock family."

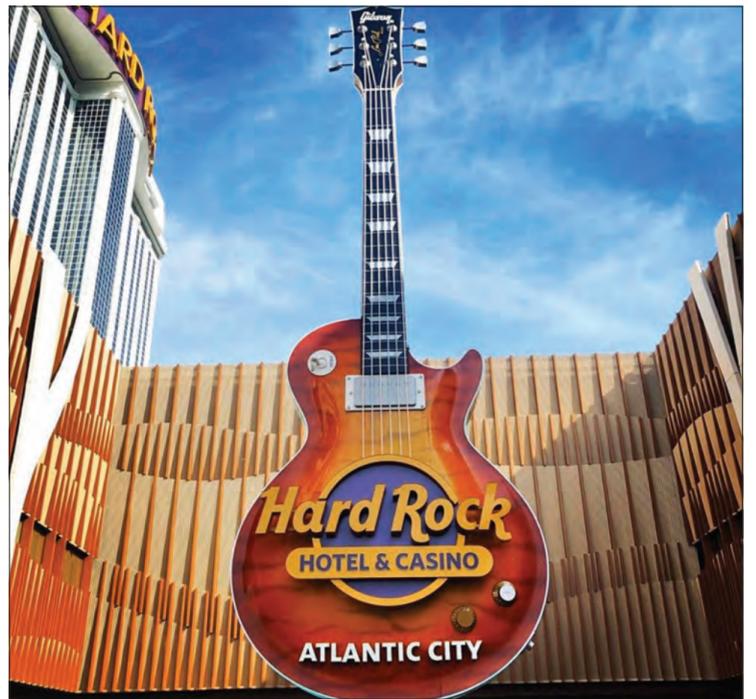
Allen said 10,000 to 12,000 employees received bonuses that ranged between \$250 and \$1,000 depending on their specific positions within the company.

Employees in Florida – where Hard Rock's two flagship casino properties are located in Hollywood and Tampa – were among those who received the bonuses. Employees in New Jersey did as well, where the company operates the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City.

Allen addressed Atlantic City employees virtually when the bonuses were announced in January.

"The dedication of our team members has been crucial to driving the success of our casino resorts, and we are proud that Hard Rock Atlantic City has been able to prevail during these challenging times," Allen said. "We are committed to the well-being of our valued team members."

HRI and the Seminole Tribe, which is its parent entity, said it has spent more than \$90 million in Covid-19 relief efforts across the



Employees in Atlantic City were among those that received bonuses for their hard work during the pandemic.

company's portfolio in the form of employee pay after properties were closed, benefit extensions and grocery gift card distribution.

As properties began to slowly reopen to reduced capacities, the company spent millions more to train employees to adopt and enforce Hard Rock's "Safe + Sound" protocols – cleanliness and safety measures – to put returning guests more at ease.

The protocols included the installation of Plexiglas barriers between slot machines and table game seats. Hand washing stations were built and placed throughout the casinos. Slots were rearranged to promote social distancing and high-touch areas were cleaned more frequently. Guests were also required to undergo temperature screenings, among other measures.

# Hard Rock's Reverb has Tampa in its sights

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Tampa is in line to land one of the first locations of Hard Rock's new Reverb hotel concept.

Reverb is a business-casual hotel – different than the many well-known Hard Rock destinations that sometimes have big casinos and live entertainment venues. But music fans and those that have come to know the Hard Rock brand will notice plenty of familiar touches.

Officials said Feb. 22 that Reverb by Hard Rock Tampa East is in the design process and a timeline for construction and specifics about the property would be forthcoming. It is set to be located adjacent to the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa, which is located at 5223 Orient Road about 10 minutes from downtown.

The Reverb brand is owned by Hard Rock International's (HRI) parent entity the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

The first of the concept – Reverb Downtown Atlanta – opened in Atlanta last December. It is adjacent to the Mercedes-Benz Stadium where the National Football League's Atlanta Falcons play.

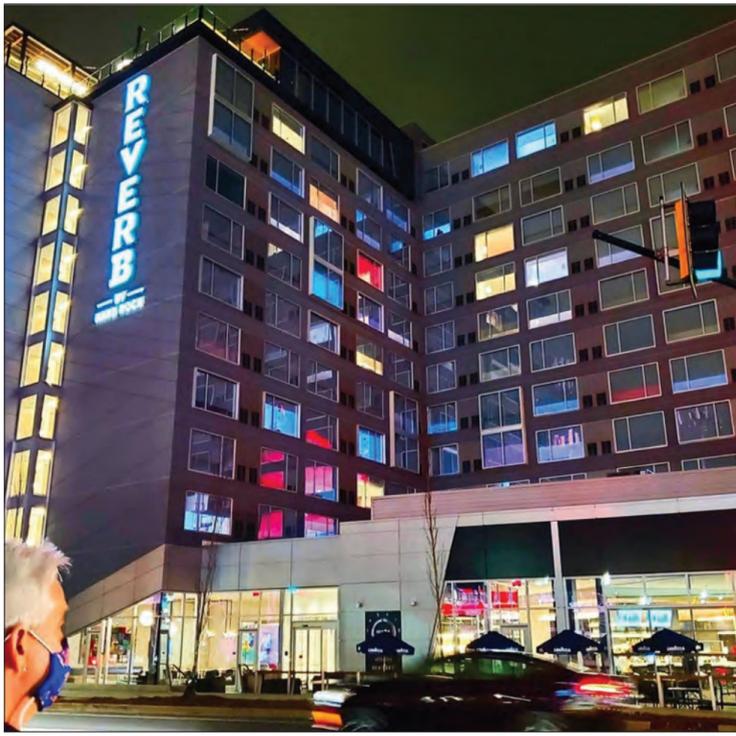
The Atlanta Reverb is 11 stories high and has 195 rooms. There are workspaces, common areas and a rooftop bar. The customary Constant Grind Coffee & Bar is onsite – a café by day and a bar at night offering beer, wine and spirits.

The hotel has a dedicated performance area for live music featuring local talent.

Officials said the Tampa location will also have unique features – local city guides, unique common spaces and traveler-friendly integrated technology like smart rooms.

The Atlanta Reverb and its rooms are heavy on tech-amenities. Guests can use an in-room Amazon Alexa to access a city guide with the voices of famous musicians who recommend local hot spots where hometown music acts are performing.

The Reverb properties are designed to highlight Hard Rock's traditional music-centric theme – one that has been present in its hotels and cafes for almost five decades – “but with its own unique spin, celebrating



A fan of the Reverb in Atlanta took this image of the hotel's exterior.

modern music lovers while encouraging them to connect and create in a new city.”

What would be a third Reverb location, scheduled to debut sometime this year, is in the works in the Sonoma County, California, city of Cotati. The property is near vineyards and wineries and is expected to have 150-rooms.

Todd Hricko, senior vice president of hotel development at HRI, said in a statement that there would be more announcements this year for additional Reverb locations in other U.S. cities.

HRI now has venues in 69 countries with 240 locations and more than 86,000 pieces of music memorabilia. In addition to Reverb, one of its newest ventures is Hard Rock Digital – a focus on online and retail sports book and interactive gaming.

HRI's two most successful flagship properties are Tampa and in Hollywood, Florida, – where the world's first guitar-shaped hotel opened in 2019.

For more, go to [reverb.hardrockhotels.com](http://reverb.hardrockhotels.com) and [hardrock.com](http://hardrock.com).

# FSU team hopes newly found fragments will provide clues in Apalachee revolt

BY SALLIE JAMES  
Special to the Tribune

A small fragment of a centuries-old olive jar from Spain may hold the key to a 17th-century revolt by the Apalachee Indian Nation against Spanish missionaries in north Florida.

A Tallahassee property owner recently stumbled upon the bit of clay pottery and some other artifacts and reached out to Florida State University's Department of Anthropology for advice. FSU confirmed the fragments were consistent with the Spanish mission period of 1633-1704, before the English colonized the region.

Associate professor of anthropology Tanya Peres believes the artifacts may guide them to the exact location of the 1647 Apalachee revolt, which has never been found.

“We would definitely like to confirm that it is the site of the start of the Apalachee revolt of 1647, which means it would be a pretty important site in terms of the Colonial period of occupation here in north Florida,” said Peres, who has spent much of her career excavating Mission San Luis in Tallahassee.

She hopes they can provide a longed-for glimpse into the vicious battle that initiated a series of conflicts that led to the tribe's eventual decimation.

“After this revolt the way the Spanish treated the Indigenous people here changed for the worse,” Peres noted. “This revolt had world-altering ramifications, not just for the Apalachees but all the Indigenous people in ... the colony (the Spanish) established that included Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and southwest North Carolina.”

The National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program is funding the excavation project with a \$207,000 grant.

Existing research on the revolt suggests it stemmed from an unexpected ambush on a community that was busy celebrating the feast of San Antonio.

An ambushing group of Apalachee and Chisca attacked the mission, killing everyone who was present and then burned all the structures to the ground, Peres said.

In attendance were the Spanish Lieutenant Governor, his wife, their pregnant daughter, her husband and numerous Spanish priests from the area.

“We don't know what happened as far as the attack. We do know that they killed all of those people and they burned structures to the ground, then went to seven other mission sites in the area and burned them to the ground as well,” Peres said.

“Interestingly enough, there were no Spanish soldiers at the festival. They were allegedly at the Lieutenant Governor's cattle ranch,” she added. “When they got word of this attack, they went off to St. Augustine to alert the Governor, then rallied the troops to

crush the rebellion.”

One of the repercussions of the revolt of 1647 was that the Spanish began enforcing their labor tax and required able-bodied males from the Indigenous population to physically work for the Spanish crown at various times of the year, Peres said.

The enforced labor resulted in many deaths, as the Apalachee men portaged tallow, pork and other goods to St. Augustine by foot where they had to work while their own families suffered at home.

Peres and her team of graduate students have already begun examining the site using remote-sensing in a process that allows them to see below the surface in a manner similar to an X-ray or CAT scan.

She is encouraged by what the olive jar's presence could mean. Olive jars were made in Spain and used as transportation storage jars for everything from olive oil, wine, vinegar and chickpeas. They are an indication of civilization.

“Those were things that were very important to Spanish life ways and they would ship to wherever they were colonizing,” Peres noted.

Burned residences, burned missions and huge trash pits are some of the things the researchers are hoping to find at the site.

“We know what these mission sites looked like. We know what a footprint of this church would look like, or what a friar's residence would look like,” Peres said. “They would dig these big quarry pits for construction of their buildings and then fill them with trash. It is the kind of area that can tell us a lot about their lives.”

The history of the Apalachee in Florida is of great interest because of the impact the tribe had on northwest Florida. The Apalachee were present in Florida from at least AD 1000, according to research by the University of South Florida.

Settlements were concentrated in today's Leon and Jefferson counties. Before the Europeans arrived in Florida, there were 50,000 to 60,000 Apalachee in the area, according to USF estimates.

However, repeated conflicts with the Spanish, along with contagious diseases carried by the Europeans eventually decimated their numbers. Today the Apalachee live mainly in Louisiana, but are not a federally recognized tribe, Peres said.

According to USF, the Apalachee were prosperous and were fierce warriors. They grew corn, beans and squash and hunted bear, deer, and small game. They were known for their large ceremonial mounds, which sometimes had structures on top.

“We are trying to look at this site from the view of the Indigenous people and not from the view of the Spanish. We look at a lot of history from the viewpoint of the colonizers,” said Peres, who is considered an expert on the southeastern United States.



FSU anthropology graduate student Laylah Roberts works in an excavation unit at a site in Tallahassee where fragments were found that could reveal details about the Apalachee Indian Nation's revolt in the 17th century.

# Pandemic pushes gaming revenue to 18-year low

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

One of the first official glimpses into the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on commercial gaming was revealed Feb. 17 and the view is as bad as many expected.

Commercial gaming revenue totaled \$30 billion in 2020, a 31% drop from 2019.

The American Gaming Association (AGA) through its “commercial gaming revenue tracker” reported the results. Seminole Gaming is one of the tribal casino operator members of the organization.

Last year represented the first market contraction for the U.S. gaming industry since 2014 and the lowest gaming revenue total since 2003 – 18 years ago.

One positive note from the AGA report was 2020's fourth quarter momentum – a 1.7% increase in revenue over the third quarter. However, the nearly \$9.2 billion Q4 revenue still represented a 17% decrease year-over-year.

“Covid-19 devastated our business and the employees and communities across the country that rely on casino gaming's success,” AGA president and CEO Bill Miller said in a statement. “We have persevered by leading responsible reopening efforts, supporting our employees, and extending a hand to our communities. Still, these numbers show the economic realities of Covid-19 and underscore the importance of targeted federal relief and ramped-up vaccine distribution to accelerate gaming's

recovery in 2021.”

Nonrevenue numbers in the report also tell the story. Commercial casinos lost 27% of normal operating days throughout 2020, due to mandated or self-imposed Covid-19 closures. To a lesser degree, there were also disruptions caused by hurricanes along the Gulf Coast.

Commercial casinos were open (with significant capacity restrictions) for an estimated 124,882 days in 2020 instead of a potential 170,484 days – a difference of 48,602 days.

Hospitality and travel have been among the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic, which has put a strain on gaming's ancillary businesses.

Live entertainment, tourism and meetings and conventions – which can make up more than half of casino resort revenue – all came to a standstill in 2020 and is only now starting to shake loose, the AGA said.

### Some light

Casino properties started reopening in mid-2020 and there were 911 out of 998 U.S. casinos open at the time the AGA's report was published.

AGA research also shows about one-in-three American adults plan to visit a casino in 2021 – near the highest rate since the group began tracking in March 2020.

In addition, about 80 percent of future casino visitors agreed that the industry has done a good job at safely reopening.

Gaming's performance in 2020 was also

buoyed by the growth of new options, the report noted. Legal sports betting delivered an all-time high of \$1.5 billion in revenue, up 69 percent year-over-year, and iGaming revenue (poker, sports betting, online casinos) nearly tripled to almost \$1.6 billion.

Thirty commercial gaming markets were operational in 2020, while seven jurisdictions launched legal sports betting markets and West Virginia launched a new iGaming market, the AGA said.

### 2019 was big winner

The 2020 report comes on the heels of data that showed 2019 was a banner year for Indian gaming.

The National Indian Gaming Commission reported late last year a record \$34.6 billion in gross gaming revenues for the industry in fiscal year 2019 – a 2.5% increase over 2018.

It was the highest reported revenue in the 32 years since the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act was enacted, the NIGC said.

The NIGC expects to have an idea of the pandemic's particular impact on Indian gaming when the fiscal year 2020 results are released later this year.

The NIGC oversees the regulation of 527 gaming establishments operated by 247 tribes across 29 states.

For more, including the full AGA report, go to [americangaming.org](http://americangaming.org). More from NIGC is available at [nigc.gov](http://nigc.gov).

Q4 GGR PER GAMING VERTICAL, YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE				
Total GGR	Slot GGR*	Table Game GGR*	Sports Betting GGR	iGaming GGR
\$9.19B -16.5%	\$5.63B -20.3%	\$1.45B -29.9%	\$860.4M +129.5%	\$484.5M +185.3%

CY2020 GGR PER GAMING VERTICAL, YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE				
Total GGR	Slot GGR*	Table Game GGR*	Sports Betting GGR	iGaming GGR
\$29.98B -31.3%	\$18.87B -33.8%	\$5.09B -39.4%	\$1.53B +68.9%	\$1.55B +198.9%

\*Illinois, Michigan, and Louisiana are not included in slot and table game data as these states did not separate revenue for the two verticals in 2020.  
Source: American Gaming Association



A field crew works at the site in January.



Reconstructed olive jars on display at Mission San Luis in Tallahassee.

The commercial gaming industry saw a 31% drop in revenue in 2020 due to pandemic-related casino closures and health and safety restrictions.

Courtesy AGA

Tanya Peres/FSU

# SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

## A museum's responsibility – how the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki collection grows

BY TARA BACKHOUSE  
Collections Manager, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

**BIG CYPRESS** — When a museum talks about its collection, it is a general term that includes any historic or modern item

that, is cared for at the museum and helps it fulfill its mission. The museum takes responsibility for its collection and agrees to care for it using professional standards that help preserve it for future generations. For example, an art museum will have many types of art in its collection, such as

paintings, sculpture, and works on paper. It might collect only artists from a certain date range or geographical location, depending on the purpose of the museum. But a historic or cultural museum, like the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki, usually has lots of different types of objects. This is because museums that represent



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

An abstract landscape by Elgin Jumper challenges us to think beyond what is traditionally considered Seminole art. Colloquially known as "Seminoles in Space," this artwork really takes the Seminole story into the future.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

"Influence," a contemporary beaded sash made by Brian Zepeda, one of the few modern artists who has helped revive historic southeastern beading techniques.

cultures or share historic stories need a lot of things from the past and present to bring their stories alive. Since the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum was chartered in 1989, staff has worked hard to collect many different things that help tell the Seminole story.

Today the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki collection has grown to include nearly 200,000 objects. We have amazing and beautiful things that are held in trust for the Seminole Tribe. Our objects, documents and photographs date from the late 18th to the early 21st century. We have hundreds of pieces of patchwork and examples of dolls. We have very nice baskets and beaded objects like bandolier bags and moccasins. We have wonderful art from contemporary Seminole artists. We have many documents, newspapers and letters that tell how the United States government and its soldiers and pioneers waged war against the Seminole people and their allies during the 1800s. And we have thousands of photographs that show how life has changed through the 20th and 21st century.

So did you ever wonder how a museum decides what to collect, especially when a collection is already so large? The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki has an acquisitions committee that works hard to make sure that everything that is added to the collection serves the

Seminole Tribe. The committee aims to avoid adding to an area of the collection where history is already well represented. They look for unique pieces that help show a full historic picture. The committee is also careful to consider the condition of potential acquisitions. The committee strives to be well informed, thoughtful and fiscally responsible. Currently the committee seeks to bolster the representation of modern Seminole artistry in the collection. Contemporary patchwork, beadwork, crafts and fine art will show future generations how Seminole art thrived during the 21st century.

If you are an artist and would like to talk about adding a piece to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki collection, please contact me to find out more. And if you'd like to be a part of the acquisitions process, we'd also like to hear from you. The committee is voluntary and meets quarterly. Just let me know if you're interested. I can be reached at tarbackhouse@seminoletribe.com. Looking forward to it!

## NMAI names six new members to board of trustees

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian announced in February six new members are joining its board of trustees in 2021. The board has also elected new leadership. Five members were confirmed by the institution's board of regents at its meeting Feb. 1; confirmation of the sixth is anticipated at the board's April 12 meeting.

The new board members are:

- Julie Fate Sullivan (Koyukon Athabascan) is a shareholder of Doyon Ltd. and Baan O Yeel Kon, her regional and village corporations established by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. She is a board member for Covenant House Alaska, the state's largest shelter for trafficked and homeless youth, ages 13 to 21, and a founding board member of the Alaska Native Media Group, which promotes and advances Alaska Natives in journalism.

- Olivia Hoeft (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin) is a marketing manager for Google.org, the philanthropic arm of Google. She is a lead of the Google American Indian

Network, an internal employee resource group that aims to improve the lives of Native Americans both at and outside of the company.

- Robbie McGhee (Poarch Creek) is vice chairman of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians Tribal Council. He previously worked at the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Senate and Troutman Sanders LLP-Indian Law Practice Group. He currently serves on the boards of the National Indian Child Welfare Association, Children First Alabama and the Center for Native American Youth.

- Ann Silverman (Ojibwe) is president of Wilmington Trust's private banking team and a member of its wealth management leadership team. Silverman started at M&T Bank (which acquired Wilmington Trust in 2011) in 2004 as a relationship manager and a commercial lender for its commercial bank in Washington, D.C. Before joining M&T Bank, she was a project manager and exhibition developer for the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City and the National Museum of American History.

- Valerie Smith is the 15th president

of Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. She began her career in higher education at Princeton and later joined the faculty at UCLA. In 2001 she returned to Princeton as the Woodrow Wilson Professor of Literature and professor of English and African American studies. She was the university's founding director of the Center for African American Studies and dean of the college. She is the author of more than 40 articles and three books. (Appointment pending approval at board of regents' April 12 meeting.)

- Joshua Spear is an active entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist. He co-founded Undercurrent, a consulting firm that applies a digital worldview to help solve some of the most complex problems facing today's corporations and their leaders. He supports numerous organizations around the world that fight injustice and poverty and give a voice to the voiceless.

The board of trustees elected Kathy Hopinkah Hannan (Ho-Chunk) to serve as its chair. Hannan is a retired executive of KMPG LLP, where she served as a global lead partner, national managing partner and a vice chairman. She is the recent past



Covenant House Alaska/Poarch Creek

Julie Fate Sullivan (Koyukon Athabascan) and Robert McGhee (Poarch Creek) are among a half-dozen new members of NMAI's board of trustees.

chairman and national president of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America. Hannan succeeds Bill Lomax (Gitksan), a

vice president in the investment management division of Goldman Sachs, who will finish his term on the board as chair emeritus.

## Native American oral histories being preserved, digitized

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

The oral histories of thousands of Native Americans, representing more than 150 cultures, are being digitized at seven American universities thanks to more than \$1.6 million in grants from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

The Native Oral History Revitalization Project is being coordinated by the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums (ATALM), which will create a website for the archived materials. The recordings, some over 50 years old, will be transcribed, digitized, indexed and be accessible to Native communities, students and the public.

The universities participating in the project are the University of Florida, University of Arizona, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, University of New Mexico, University of Oklahoma, University of South Dakota and University of Utah. The two-year grant will also allow the universities to expand their collections to include contemporary voices and develop related curriculums and educational resources for students and visitors.

The project is part of a philanthropic endeavor begun by Duke in 1966 to collect oral histories from Native leaders. Those interviewed talked about their experiences living on reservations, attending Native schools and Native traditions. By 2010, more than 6,500 recordings were made and archived at the universities.

UF's collection contains more than 260 interviews with a wide array of Seminole

tribal members over the years. Many of the recordings were made in the 1970s, with funding from Duke before the existence of the foundation.

Other Native Americans in the UF collection include Catawba, Lumbee, Urban Lumbee, Creek, Mississippi Choctaw, Cherokee, Virginia Indians and Oklahoma Creek. The collection contains about 1,000 interviews along with photos and other media.

"On behalf of the 150 Native cultures represented in the collections, we thank the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation for recognizing the importance of preserving the narratives of Indigenous peoples," Susan Feller, ATALM president said in a statement. "The recordings, now over 50 years old, represent a treasure trove of unique stories told in the voices of our ancestors. The university repositories entrusted with the collections have been good stewards and are now working diligently to provide access to the originating communities. We are honored to be entrusted with overseeing the project on behalf of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and applaud its commitment to ensuring the cultural continuity of Native peoples."

The foundation's goals include supporting work that benefits the well-being of Native families and communities. Its mission is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, child well-being and medical research.

## Coin honors Native American military service

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The theme of the 2021 Native American \$1 Coin is Native Americans in the U.S. Military.

Native Americans have served in the Armed Forces of the United States in each of the United States' conflicts, beginning with the Revolutionary War. They have served at a higher rate in proportion to their population than any other ethnic group. During World War I, Native Americans volunteered to fight in astonishing numbers although most were ineligible for the draft. Of the 10,000 Native Americans who served in the Army and the 2,000 who served in the Navy, three out of

four were volunteers.

The obverse (heads) design retains the central figure of the Native American \$1 coin program "Sacagawea" carrying her infant son, Jean Baptiste.

This year's reverse (tails) design features eagle feathers, which were traditionally earned in battle or by performing a brave deed. Eagle feathers are revered and respected, receiving the utmost care and handling, and are to be displayed proudly in homes. Stars representing five branches of the U.S. military are in the foreground, while a circle provides an additional reference to Native Americans. An inscription reads: "Native Americans - Distinguished Military Service since 1775."

In 2009, the U.S. Mint began minting

and issuing \$1 coins as part of the Native American \$1 Coin Program. The coins feature designs celebrating the important contributions made by Indian tribes and individual Native Americans to the history and development of the United States. The program is authorized by the Native American \$1 Coin Act.

The program builds on the Sacagawea Golden Dollar, first released in 2000. It featured a portrait of Sacagawea carrying her infant son, Jean-Baptiste on the obverse (heads side) and an eagle on the reverse (tails side). It was authorized under Public Law 105-124, also known as the United States \$1 Coin Act of 1997.

For more information about the coin visit usmint.gov.



U.S. Mint

The 2021 Native American \$1 coin features "Sacagawea" carrying her infant son on the obverse side, and a tribute to Native American military service on the reverse side.



# Health

## ◆ VACCINE From page 1A

The tribe has been receiving doses of the vaccine through the Indian Health Service — a strategy that has paid off for several tribes across the country as the U.S. vaccine rollout through state systems has hit various snags and delays. The Seminole Tribe and others have been vaccinating at faster rates than U.S. averages.

### Dr. Kiswani-Barley promoted to HHS head

Dr. Vandhana Kiswani-Barley of HHS has been overseeing vaccine distribution with the head of public safety, William Latchford. Latchford's Fire Rescue personnel have been tasked with administering the vaccine.

"We have done our outreach across all reservations and have adequate supplies," Kiswani-Barley said Feb. 21.

Meanwhile, Kiswani-Barley was named the executive director of HHS on Feb. 1. She had been the interim executive director since June 29, succeeding former head Dr. Paul Isaacs.

Kiswani-Barley, a family physician,

works out of the Betty Mae Jumper Medical Center on the Hollywood Reservation. She previously worked for two years at the Big Cypress health clinic as a family practitioner.

Kiswani-Barley was familiar with the Hollywood Reservation's health care system, because she used to visit the clinic once a week while working in Big Cypress. She and her family also live in nearby Weston.

Kiswani-Barley was medically trained in New York City and then worked in rural medicine in Iowa — including with populations with high levels of comorbidities (patients presenting more than one disease). While in Iowa, she became the chief medical officer in a rural health clinic and the head of four ambulatory units.

Swapping New York City for Florida, she moved to Broward County in 2017 for a year's worth of private practice before interviewing with the tribe.

*Editor's note: The tribe also continues to offer drive-thru Covid-19 testing for tribal and community members at sites in Hollywood, Big Cypress, Brighton and Immokalee. For more information on testing or the vaccine, call local clinics or the HHS hotline at (833) 786-3458.*



Damon Scott

**Stephen Zitnick, of Seminoles Fire Rescue, prepares to administer vaccine shots Dec. 29, 2020, at the tribe's headquarters in Hollywood.**

## Seminole Tribe returns as sponsor of NICWA conference

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) is gearing up to host its second-ever virtual conference and the Seminole Tribe is once again the lead sponsor.

It's the 39th conference overall, which brings together Natives involved in child advocacy issues. The 2021 theme is "Connectedness, Resilience, and Persistence." It takes place April 11 to April 14.

"In the face of multiple and layered health, economic and social crises, we as Indigenous Peoples and communities have stayed connected, been resilient, and persisted," the conference description reads. "With hope, and prepared by the ones who came before us, we act to bring ourselves, our communities, and our world back into balance. We don't know when that will be, nor how rough the road will be as we pass through difficult times, but we do know that we will be stronger together, whether in person or virtually."

Organizers said last year's virtual event had 1,557 registrations in all and as many as 700 participants in any given session.

Keynote speakers this year with experience in child welfare systems range from high-level government officials to young people. Participants are expected to represent a cross-section of fields and interests including child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice service providers; legal professionals; students; advocates for children; and tribal, state, and federal leaders.

Amory Zschach, NICWA's strategic communications manager, said the goals of



Courtesy NICWA

Jessiray Wheeler, a descendant of the Colville Confederated Tribes and the Hoh Tribe, created this artwork called "The Huddle."

the four-day conference are to:

- Highlight effective services.
- Report innovative child welfare practices.
- Share financing strategies.
- Showcase youth and family involvement.
- Create peer-to-peer networks.
- Learn the latest research.

"Our programming is reflective of the urgency to meet our mission through a virtual delivery," Lindsay Early (Comanche), NICWA's deputy director, said.

Early also acknowledged the Seminole Tribe's support of the conference.

"[The Seminole Tribe's] unrestricted donation powers our advocacy to protect Native children, keeping them connected to their family, community and culture," she said. "[The] support helps us provide essential training to frontline workers who may not have been able to attend in previous years."

## Why Native Americans are getting Covid-19 vaccines faster

BY KIRK SIEGLER  
NPR

Lila Kills In Sight lost her 81-year-old mother to Covid-19 on Nov. 23.

"I really don't know who to be mad at," she said. "Who do I take my frustration to, how do I deal with it?"

Kills In Sight, an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, is the first to say she's not dealing with it well. She had been keeping her mom sheltered mostly in her home in the remote community of Spring Creek as the pandemic raged in South Dakota. But in September she broke her hip. Then in November she fell.

"I had to make a really hard decision to take her to the hospital because I didn't know if there was anything broken," Kills In Sight said.

With her mom in so much pain, she felt she had no choice but to take her to the doctor in Nebraska, then later the Indian Health Service hospital in nearby Rosebud, S.D. She's not sure where they got infected, but they both ended up with Covid-19 shortly after. Her mother went downhill fast and ended up having to be airlifted to a larger hospital in Sioux Falls, where she died two weeks later.

Kills In Sight is grieving and wracked with guilt.

"I walk in the door and I don't have nobody greeting me, nobody to talk to in Lakota," she said. "And my kids, they're cheated out of that. We've lost so many elders, a lot of Lakota speakers and what they took with them, we're never going to get back."

Twenty-five tribal members, mostly elders, have died from Covid-19 so far on the isolated and long-neglected Rosebud Reservation. Hundreds more here were sickened or hospitalized. Everyone knows someone who has it or had it, or worse, died from it. Native Americans across the country have been disproportionately hit by the virus — dying at twice the rates as white people.

### Rolling the dice

The arrival of the vaccines has offered the first real hope in months — a bright footnote after a lot of tragedy. While nationally the rollout of vaccines has been marked by stumbles and inequities, distribution in Rosebud has been fast and efficient.

When the vaccines came online in December, Rosebud Sioux President Rodney Bordeaux faced a tough choice. He could either go through the state of South Dakota to get them, which in his view hasn't taken the virus seriously enough, or go with the

perennially underfunded IHS; the tribe has a still pending lawsuit over past appalling conditions at the local hospital.

"We were afraid, our people were a lot afraid," Bordeaux said. "We didn't have the resources, we thought we'd be getting left behind."

After a lot of phone calls and lobbying, the tribe rolled the dice and went with the IHS anyway. And Bordeaux said it paid off. Recently the tribe has been vaccinating its communities at near double the rate of South Dakota. An analysis by NPR shows that Rosebud is not unique. Across Indian Country, tribes are getting shots in people's arms at far faster rates than U.S. averages.

"We've even had non-Indian people from Sioux Falls and Omaha trying to get in here to get vaccinated because they can't get it over there," Bordeaux said.

On the Navajo Nation, nearly 21,000 members have been fully vaccinated since doses were released in mid-December, and more than 100,000 Navajo have at least had one shot, said President Jonathan Nez.

"I couldn't be [more] proud of how quickly the teams are getting shots into the arms of our Navajo citizens," Nez told NPR.

Vaccination drives there are open to anyone over 18 years old, a contrast to surrounding Arizona communities still limiting appointments to those over 65. For the most part, tribal health departments that went with IHS distribution seem far ahead of those that went with state systems.

In Montana, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes said that their health department was initially allocated only 200 doses a week by the state, though that number has risen recently. In contrast, the White Mountain Apache Tribe of Arizona has daily clinics that can accommodate 180 appointments per day, and the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma estimated 10% of their population has been fully vaccinated so far. Both the White Mountain Apache and the Cherokee Nation went with the IHS.

### Wishing it came sooner

In Rosebud, in partnership with the tribe, the IHS holds two mass vaccination clinics a week. One is a traveling clinic typically in outlying towns — about 11,000 people are scattered across the nearly 2,000-square-mile reservation. The other is every Thursday at the Rosebud Hospital, which lately has been drawing crowds in the hundreds.

One recent bitter cold morning, Amanda Bordeaux, a paraprofessional at the high school, waited to get her second Pfizer shot.

"I worry about my family members," she said. "My aunt passed away from it and

she was young."

Bordeaux also lost her 91-year-old grandmother from the virus in November.

"When I got my first dose I was a little bit angry because I wish it had been sooner for them," Bordeaux said.

Analysts say it may not be perfect but the IHS is at least a centralized system. In Rosebud there's an existing database of the some 15,000 people hospital officials are trying to reach during the vaccination campaign. Earlier in the pandemic, they set up an infrastructure for mass testing, so pivoting to vaccinations has gone relatively smoothly.

Public health officials here are also practiced with immunizing people in tough conditions. Some tribal members don't have cars, let alone cellphones.

"It takes a lot of critical thinking in how we're going to utilize this vaccine so we don't waste it," said Callie Raymond, who oversees nursing at the hospital.

Before the hospital got its own ultra-cold storage unit, Raymond was driving 100 miles one way to the Pine Ridge Reservation to pick up the Pfizer shots. If they get no-shows for appointments, her team goes wherever they can to administer shots. On Super Bowl Sunday, she even drove to a local supermarket with extra vials. They made an announcement and managed to get all the extra shots to shoppers.

Out of the close to 5,000 doses they've received so far, only three have been wasted, Raymond said.

[Feb. 12], the temperature outside was six below zero. Ground blizzards had led to an emergency travel-only advisory. Yet the tribe was still running its shuttles out to pick up people like Francine Little Hoop who had no other means to get to the clinic 10 miles away.

"This is my first time, I wanted to get the shot," Little Hoop said.

In the town of St. Francis, snowdrifts covered the yard in front of Little Hoop's home. It was one of only a few on this road that wasn't boarded up — drug and alcohol abuse on the reservation are rampant and many families are often crowded into dilapidated structures, easy conditions for the virus to spread.

"I just stay away from people; I only stay in my house," Little Hoop said, her voice obscured by a thick mask.

## Suicide prevention conference seeks sponsors, presentations

FROM PRESS RELEASES

The World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference (Aug. 24-26 in Winnipeg, Canada) is seeking sponsorship and workshop/presentation

submissions for data and policy, community collaborations and external partners, creative expression through arts and 2SLGBTQIA (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and

asexual). Also, WISPC is seeking bids for the next hosts of the WISPC. For more information contact Carla Cochrane at (204) 942-9400 or wispc@fhssm.com.

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# SEMINOLE SCENES



Molly Bartels/Indian River State College (2)  
**PERFECT PITCH:** At left, Brighton Councilman and former Indian River State College student Larry Howard throws out the ceremonial first pitch for the IRSC baseball team prior to its home game against Florida Southwestern State College on Feb. 12 in Fort Pierce. At right, Councilman Howard joins IRSC head baseball coach Frank Torre Jr. (left) and IRSC President Dr. Timothy Moore (right).



Kevin Johnson (2)  
**SUPER SUNDAY:** Super Bowl LV between the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Kansas City Chiefs on Feb. 7 was offered as a drive in theater experience on the Hollywood Reservation with two large video screens set up near the rodeo grounds. At left, Hollywood Culture's Bobby Frank and Valerie Frank serve sofkee as part of the food and beverages provided for fans.



## *Seminole Scenes Rewind: Images from the past - Seminole cowboys circa 1950s*



Above, a cattle owners meeting. Below right, cattle owners' kids hold a calf for branding.



Cattle owners line up against a fence for a group photo, believed to be in the early 1950s.



# NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

## Indigenous activists ask San Rafael to drop felony charges in toppling of monument

Two of the Indigenous women charged with bringing down a monument to Junipero Serra were baptized in the church founded by the Catholic priest and missionary, who participated in the Spanish colonization of California in the 1700s. Ahead of their trials, advocates are asking the city to drop the charges entirely.

Police did not stop demonstrators from bringing down the statue of Junipero Serra in front of Mission San Rafael Arcangel in San Rafael, Calif., on Oct. 11, Indigenous People's Day — or Columbus Day. The planned protest was part of a wave that swept the nation last year after the police killing of George Floyd inspired Americans to remove statues of figures linked to racism.

"During this incident and the subsequent destruction of the statue, it was considered that the statue could be replaced or repaired and that the importance of using sound judgment and de-escalation techniques was paramount to preventing physical interactions between officers and protestors," the San Rafael Police Department said in a release at the time.

Ines Shiam Gardilic, 40, Victoria Eva Montanopena, 29, Melissa Aguilar, 36, Mayorgi Nadeska Delgadillo, 36, Moira Cribben Van de Walker, 25, and Andrew Lester Mendle, whose age was not available in public documents, were arrested, issued citations and released, before later being charged with felony vandalism. In the weeks following, Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco and police asked the Marin County district attorney to prosecute the case to the "full extent of the law," including a charge of vandalism in a house of worship, a hate crime.

"In our view, this attack on a cherished religious symbol on our own church property is not a minor property crime, but an attack on Catholics as a people," said Cordileone.

- The Hill

## Son of former Pojaoque governor named White House director of tribal affairs

PaaWee Rivera, son of George Rivera, former governor of the Pueblo of Pojaoque, is the new director of tribal affairs for the Biden Administration and senior adviser to the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

PaaWee Rivera, who was sworn in the day Biden was inaugurated, could not be reached for comment, but George Rivera said he is proud of his son's accomplishments.

"He is going to do well in representing people across the country," George Rivera said. "He is very young and bright, and energetic and wants to help people."

After attending Santa Fe Prep, PaaWee Rivera graduated from Dartmouth College with a degree in government and a minor in Native American studies.

Rivera, 29, worked on Capitol Hill as a lobbyist for the law firm Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP, before transitioning to positions within the Democratic National Committee.

Most recently, Rivera worked with the Biden-Harris campaign as its Western coalitions director. Prior to that, he served as Sen. Elizabeth Warren's Western political director, Colorado state director for her 2020 presidential run and as a special adviser for the 2018 Senate reelection campaign.

- Santa Fe New Mexican (Santa Fe, N.M.)

## Saskatchewan First Nation erects blockade after company enters territory without consent

A northern Saskatchewan First Nation blockaded a road and issued a cease-and-desist order against a Toronto uranium company.

Birch Narrows Dene Nation officials say they took action after workers with Baselode Energy Corp. started surveying the band's traditional territory without consent.

"It was very disrespectful, totally uncalled for," Birch Narrows Chief Jonathon Sylvester said. "This is not being done properly."

It's unclear how the stalemate will be broken, but the case raises a host of legal, environmental and economic issues.

One academic said Canada's Constitution and emerging case law is clear: First Nations concerns must be front and centre on any development affecting them.

"Certain behaviours or ways of doing business that might have worked in the past no longer work, based on a more robust understanding of how treaty rights and aboriginal rights need to be reconciled," lawyer and University of Saskatchewan lecturer Benjamin Ralston said.

Birch Narrows trapper and elder Ron Desjardin discovered the survey crew earlier this month on one of the community's trap lines, 600 kilometres northeast of Saskatoon.

The area sits on the edge of the Athabasca Basin. It's home to some of the world's richest uranium deposits but also to endangered woodland caribou, lynx and other wildlife.

Desjardin called Sylvester to see whether he had given permission for the crew to begin its work. Sylvester had not.

- CBC

## Minnesota returns 114 acres to Lower Sioux Indian Community

In an emotional ceremony in January,

the Minnesota Historical Society officially returned 114 acres along the Minnesota River bluffs to the Lower Sioux Indian Community.

The land transfer, approved by the Legislature in 2017, became official Feb. 12, returning about half of the southern Minnesota property around the nonprofit's historic site to the tribe.

"I don't know if it's ever happened before, where a state gave land back to a tribe," Lower Sioux President Robert Larsen said. "[Our ancestors] paid for this land over and over with their blood, with their lives. It's not a sale; it's been paid for by the ones that aren't here anymore."

It's a significant step for the Lower Sioux, one of 11 sovereign tribes in Minnesota, four of which are Dakota or Sioux. The land is the Lower Sioux homeland, known as Cansa'yapi (Dakota for "where they marked the trees red") and where the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 began. For more than 20 years, the Lower Sioux sought to reclaim the property.

The final step came in January as the Historical Society's board voted on the action. Larsen tuned in online from his office and held his breath with each vote, fearing the decision could stall. When the vote passed, he choked up, thinking of what his ancestors endured.

"We can try to reclaim that relationship with the land and hopefully we can continue the healing," he said. "It's great for Indian Country in all."

The tribe will maintain trails on the land and hopes to draw more visitors to learn the history.

"This is a victory for the Lower Sioux Community ... it's more than symbolic, it's actionable," said Kate Beane, director of Native American Initiatives at the Historical Society and a member of the Flandreau Santee Sioux in South Dakota. "What this specific incidence highlights is that there are actionable things that some agencies and organizations can do to help support the healing."

The Dakota people lived on millions of acres before ceding land in an 1851 treaty. The U.S. government established the Lower Sioux Agency and by 1862, war broke out. In the end, 38 Dakota men were hanged in the largest mass execution in U.S. history, and the Dakota were forced to relocate to reservations and small parcels of land. Before this month's action, Lower Sioux tribal land totaled 1,800 acres.

"There are local farmers that have more land than the tribe does," Larsen said.

Beane, whose ancestors were born on the Lower Sioux reservation, grew up visiting the historic site.

"We always saw this as Cansa'yapi, Lower Sioux land," she said. "During the war, these were some of the last areas of the land that we lost. ... This is really a huge healing opportunity for all of us as Dakota people."

The 114 acres transferred to the Lower Sioux, bought by the Historical Society in the 1960s and 1970s from private landowners, lies mostly north of the visitor center. The rest of the 130 acres is still owned by the state. Any future land transfers would require legislative approval and a review by the State Historic Preservation Office.

The Lower Sioux, which has about 1,000 enrolled members, are also working to restore traditions — from revitalizing sacred tobacco to reviving the Dakota language with classes and an immersion program. (Minnesota is a Dakota word for "cloud-tinted waters.") A new building with a cultural gathering space as well as traditional and contemporary arts studios is slated to open in June. Larsen also hopes this is the start of discussions over tribal land, shifting other sacred sites to tribes to manage.

"This isn't the end," he said. "We hope this is just a kick-start to showing people that it can be done."

- Star-Tribune (Minneapolis, Minn.)

## Interior Department withdraws appeal in Mashpee tribe's land-in-trust case

In a big victory for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, the U.S. Department of the Interior on Feb. 18 withdrew its appeal in U.S. District Court in the tribe's land-in-trust case.

"Today is sakohsuwök, a triumph," said Jessie "Little Doe" Baird, the tribe's vice chairwoman, in a statement. The decision was a win "for the citizens of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and our Ancestors who have fought and died to ensure our Land and sovereign rights are respected," she said.

The Department of Interior filed a motion Feb. 18 for the voluntary dismissal of its appeal, wrote Rachel Heron, attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice Environmental and Natural Resources Division.

The case was part of a long battle for tribal sovereignty, which stemmed from a \$1 billion casino the tribe wanted to build in Taunton.

U.S. Rep. William Keating, D-Mass., also hailed the decision.

"The claim that the Tribe of the First Light, the Tribe of the First Thanksgiving was not an original Native American Tribe has always been disingenuous," he said in a statement. "And the Trump Administration's sudden attempt to remove their land from trust last March — in the midst of a pandemic — was heartless. We're reassured that the Biden Administration's action today clearly reflects the best interest of justice ..."

The tribe had asked the interior secretary to put about 151 acres of land in Taunton into trust so it could build a casino, as well as another 170 acres in Mashpee. While the assistant interior secretary approved it in 2015, neighbors of the proposed casino and

others filed a lawsuit in opposition. They argued the government did not have the authority to take the land into trust in the first place.

In 2018, the Department of the Interior reversed itself, arguing the tribe was not under federal jurisdiction when the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 was established. The tribe appealed, but a federal judge in Boston ruled in favor of the reversal.

Then in June 2020, U.S. District Judge Paul Friedman found that the 2018 decision was "arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion and contrary to law." He sent the case back to the Department of the Interior for "thorough reconsideration and reevaluation of the evidence."

"We look forward to being able to close the book on this painful chapter in our history," Baird said in the statement. "The decision not to pursue the appeal allows us (to) continue fulfilling our commitment to being good stewards and protecting our Land and the future of our young ones and providing for our citizens."

- Cape Cod (Mass.) Times

## Arizona to embrace sports betting in deal with native tribes

PHOENIX — Arizonans would be allowed to bet on professional and college sports at tribal casinos and at sites owned by pro sports teams under a proposal that is part of an update to the state's deal that allows Native American tribes to run casinos.

The wide-ranging proposal introduced in the Arizona House on Feb. 1 would also allow bets to be placed online, fantasy sports wagering, and add limited Keno games at off-track betting locations and social clubs like the American Legion.

"The places it will be allowed is in the casinos, and then, there will be licenses given to the sports teams like the [Arizona Cardinals], [Phoenix Suns], [Arizona Coyotes], and also within a quarter-mile, they will have it in retail locations," said State Rep. Jeff Weninger.

The proposal introduced by Republican Rep. Jeff Weninger of Chandler has been anticipated since GOP Gov. Doug Ducey announced "an opportunity for a modernized gaming compact that will bring in more revenue for our tribal nations and our state budget," in his State of the State address last month. Ducey has been working on a new deal with tribes for several years, hoping it can boost state revenue by allowing gambling outside of tribal-run casinos.

"It helps with the engagement of the game, with the teams here," said State Rep. Weninger. "If people are making fun little bets and it helps our revenue in the state, helps businesses in the state, people are watching, going out to bars and restaurants."

The biggest part of the plan would allow pro sports teams like the Phoenix Coyotes, Arizona Diamondbacks, and Arizona Cardinals run sports betting operations at their respective venues, at a retail location within a quarter-mile and online. There would be 10 licenses awarded to sports, which could include professional golf and even NASCAR, Weninger said.

Tribes would also get 10 licenses and could run sports books at two dozen tribal casinos in the state.

The tribes, which have fiercely protected their exclusive right to most gambling in the state under the gaming compact approved by the state's voters in 2002, get the right to build some new casinos under an updated deal. And in a big win, they would also be allowed to greatly expand their exclusive gambling offerings, adding games like Baccarat and craps to existing offerings of slot machines, blackjack, and poker.

And there are options for online gambling as well, allowing growing online gambling sites like Draft Kings to piggyback on the licenses.

Fantasy sports gambling also is embraced by Weninger's proposal. The state would allow any company that meets its standards to run fantasy sports gambling operations.

Both the legislation and a 20-year extension of the state's gaming compact with tribes must be adopted for either to go into effect.

Getchen Conger, Ducey's deputy chief of staff, said the deal will help tribes and pro sports teams that have struggled during the coronavirus pandemic. And the plan is certain to boost state revenue, but it will take some time for the amount to become clear, especially revenue from gambling on sporting events.

"This is the million-dollar question," Conger said. "It really depends on what the uptake is on the event wagering."

The state gets a cut of the gambling profit, which will go to the general fund. Money from tribal gaming goes to special state accounts and local governments. In the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2020, tribes brought in nearly \$2 billion in gambling revenue and the state received \$102 million, according to a Department of Gaming report, while cities received \$13 million.

- Fox10 (Phoenix)

## Gov. Kay Ivey: No tribal gaming compact unless voters approve gambling expansion

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey said Feb. 3 she would not enter a compact with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians unless state voters approve expanded gambling for Alabama.

In an interview with three Alabama media outlets, Ivey said she would follow recommendations of her Study Group on Gambling, which said in a report issued in December that current gambling restrictions would have to be changed before the

governor could pursue a compact.

"Voters have to approve to expand gambling before we can do a compact," she said.

Ivey's comments came as legislators prepare to engage the gambling issue in the 2021 session. State voters would have to approve a constitutional amendment to allow a lottery or casino-like gaming in Alabama, a vote not likely to come before 2022. Ivey has no constitutional role in that process, but she would be responsible for negotiating a compact.

A compact with the Poarch Band — a federally-recognized tribe that runs casinos in Atmore, Montgomery and Wetumpka — would allow the tribe to have slot machines and table games (known as Class III gaming under federal law) at its casinos and return a certain portion of proceeds to the state. The Poarch Band has electronic bingo at its facilities, considered Class II gambling.

Both Ivey and Robert McGhee, the vice-chairman of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, said in an interview Wednesday there had no recent discussions about a compact. McGhee said the tribe would like to have Class III gaming in its facilities and would watch the development of gambling legislation in the session.

"We're not shutting the door to it," he said. "It hasn't come up recently."

The Alabama Constitution bans lotteries and most forms of gambling in the state. To pursue a compact, the governor's Study Group said last December that legislators would first have to change the law.

"Should Alabama decide to enter a compact to allow, and thus regulate, Class III gaming on Indian lands, the state must first determine which forms of Class III gaming to allow under its own state laws," the report said. "Only after such gaming is allowed under Alabama law may the State proceed with compact negotiations."

- Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser

## Lumbee Tribe of NC receives \$18M grant to support members amid pandemic

PEMBROKE, N.C. — The Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina was approved for \$18 million in emergency rental assistance from a grant through the U.S. Treasury Department that will help members who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the tribal council.

Tribal Chairman Harvey Godwin announced the grant approval this week and said this is the largest grant received from the federal government in the tribe's history.

"This is going to help people for a long time to come to get back up on their feet," Godwin said. "We're going to be able to serve Lumbees all across the United States, and that's a first. It's a big deal."

The grant is intended for individuals in the tribe who are in need of rental assistance or help with water and energy bills. On Feb. 4, the full tribal council voted on the budget and the grant in a virtual special meeting to be in accordance with a tribal law requirement that says all budgets must be posted for a full 30 days to provide the public with the information. After that period, the tribe can begin spending and disbursing the funds, said Tammy Manor, the tribe's administrator.

The tribe must also receive guidance from the Treasury Department on how to operate the grant.

Upon receiving an email from the National Congress of American Indians about the assistance program on Jan. 6, Godwin immediately sent the information to the tribe's grant team comprised of Tammy Maynor, Danielle McLean, the Lumbee legal and compliance officer, Housing Director Bradley Locklear, and Finance Director Sharon Bell. The four wrote the grant within six days under a quick turnaround with the Treasury Department.

"We jumped on that grant opportunity right then, not knowing that it would result in \$18 million," Manor said. "We do what we always do; we've got a good team of people and we followed the steps. It was due on the 12th and we got it in late afternoon on the 11th."

By Jan. 27, the tribe received an email that they had been approved.

"You're looking at that like, are you serious? Did you mean 18 thousand, 18 hundred?" Manor said. "It's been quite historical but it took a lot of legwork and a lot of planning. We're used to this but not of this magnitude. We're still waiting on more information but in the mean time we can begin the preliminary planning that needs to take place."

Manor said that any Lumbee person experiencing hardship because of the pandemic can apply for rental assistance, even if they do not live within the four counties the tribe serves (Cumberland, Robeson, Scotland and Hoke counties).

- Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer

## Legalization of marijuana could provide economic boost for S.D. Native American tribes

Legalization of marijuana in South Dakota could provide a new, lucrative economic-development opportunity for Native American tribes and tribal members who have historically struggled to find prosperity and stability in the state economy.

Viewer-approved measures to legalize marijuana in South Dakota may be on hold or stalled for the time being, but planning and research into creating a regulatory framework and business opportunities surrounding legal pot are continuing.

As those discussions and proposed legislation move slowly forward, it is

becoming increasingly clear that South Dakota Native tribes and communities have advantages in entering the legal marijuana market quickly and with a high chance of success.

As shown in Western states that have already legalized marijuana, Native tribes that operate as sovereign nations have found the marijuana industry to be a path to creation of new jobs, generation of tax revenues and redevelopment of communities that have often suffered economic hardship.

"It's a new industry that brings new challenges to a tribal government, but it also brings forward a demographic of people who weren't welcomed at the table before," said Laurie Thom, enforcement director at the Inter-Tribal Marijuana Enforcement Commission of Nevada. "Not only does it allow tribes to thrive, but it allows individual tribal members to spread their wings and their skill sets."

South Dakota voters in November approved a statewide initiative to legalize medicinal marijuana and passed a constitutional amendment legalizing the possession, use, growth and sale of recreational marijuana for adults. Both measures were set to take effect on July 1.

But Gov. Kristi Noem is seeking to delay legalization of medical marijuana for a year and has led a court challenge to legalization of recreational marijuana. A state judge recently declared the recreational marijuana amendment unconstitutional, but an appeal of her decision to the state Supreme Court is seen as likely.

South Dakota Sen. Troy Heinert, D-Mission, said marijuana legalization and businesses associated with marijuana can provide a boost to Native American reservations that have long faced economic challenges. South Dakota tribal communities have historically seen higher-than-average unemployment rates and low median incomes compared with the rest of the state.

"I think it has a very good chance to provide an economic engine that could transform tribal communities," he said.

Heinert, a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe who is the minority leader in the South Dakota Senate, said several factors may give an edge to tribal governments or individual tribal members who pursue economic development related to legal marijuana.

Heinert said tribal governments are smaller and more nimble than state government in regard to issuing permits or licenses related to the growth, production or sale of marijuana.

Reservation communities also have the natural resources and potential workforce to support rapid development of marijuana-related businesses.

"The biggest thing is that we can move faster," Heinert said. "We have a land base; we have lots of people who are looking for work, and it is something that would be new."

Heinert said residents on reservations and in tribal communities in South Dakota voted overwhelmingly in favor of legalization of both medical and recreational marijuana in November 2020.

- Sioux Falls (S.D.) Argus Leader

## Nez Perce Tribe steps into solar age

LAPWAI, Idaho — In an effort to bolster its sovereignty while taking steps toward energy independence and against climate change, the Nez Perce Tribe officially entered the renewable energy era Feb. 3.

Casey Mitchell, vice chairman of tribal government, flipped a switch to activate 770 solar panels recently installed on the rooftops of several buildings at tribal headquarters.

"We want to be able to really assert our sovereignty and renewable energy and solar energy is one way we can do that," he said. "We have always known the power of the sun and the moon. We dry our hides, we dry our meat, we still use the sun to this day as our ancestors did, and this is one new way we can use the sun."

The Nez Perce solar energy strategy is multifaceted, said Chantel Greene, a planner with the tribe's Department of Natural Resources and a former member of the tribe's executive committee who helped spearhead its efforts to fight climate change. Investing in solar contributes to worldwide efforts to reduce greenhouse gases and furthers the region's move to more renewable energy sources that may one day contribute to salmon recovery by allowing the dams on the lower Snake River to be breached.

It is helping train tribal workers in the booming solar and renewable energy fields, and Greene hopes this is the first step to a profitable tribal enterprise — solar energy contracting.

"Our intent is to reduce energy costs to the tribe and lessen our eco-footprint, diversify how we invest and promote the mission of our climate change and energy subcommittee," she said. "We will soon be opening our doors to the outside community and with our solar army we can provide others with solar energy and storage. This is just the beginning of our solar journey."

She said outward-looking plans include equipping the tribe's far-flung governmental buildings in places like Joseph, Ore., Orofino and Kamiah with solar panels, and the eventual creation of a Nez Perce Department of Energy.

The tribe partnered with the company RevoluSun on the project. During the monthslong installation project, about 35 tribal members gained hands-on training in the field. Many of them are continuing classes to become certified installers.

- The Lewiston (Idaho) Tribune

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# Education



## Ahfachkee students study historical Black poetry

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Throughout Black History Month in February, Ahfachkee fifth graders studied a multitude of Black history topics including poetry.

The students studied poems by Amanda Gorman and Maya Angelou that the poets recited at presidential inaugurations; Gorman spoke at Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s in January; Angelou at William J. Clinton's in 1993.

Teacher Kathy Wills' class analyzed Gorman's poem "The Hill We Climb," learned about Angelou's poem "On the Pulse of Morning," and analyzed another Angelou poem, "Life Doesn't Frighten Me."

"I try to incorporate current events as much as I can in my teaching," Wills said. "They weren't familiar with Maya Angelou. I always use her because I think she is amazing and her poetry ties into Black history. I was blown away when I heard Amanda Gorman's poem and the way she presented it. It seemed a natural thing to bring that into the classroom."

The class had already learned about the election and inauguration, so Wills had them watch Gorman recite her poem more than once. The students had a copy of the poem to follow along as they watched the video. Afterwards, they took turns reading it.

"It was a very teachable moment to me," Wills said. "We talked about the metaphors and figurative language used in the poem. I asked them to think about the message in the poem."

Students completed their answers to the meaning of the message and why they believe Gorman chose to write and recite it at the inauguration. They selected phrases from the poem that were meaningful to them. Here are some of their answers:

Terrance Robbins wrote about what the word 'hill' meant in the title of the poem.

"I think the word 'hill' in the poem, 'the hill we climb,' can be a challenge in life like say if you want to achieve a goal that you can work hard and you can achieve those goals. They are using the word 'hill' as a metaphor."

Terrance added: "The reason I think she chose to write and recite the poem for the inauguration is she wanted to teach the people around the world about life and challenges in life and how to face them."

When asked to pick lines from the poem that he found meaningful, Terrance selected: "We will not march back to what was but move to what shall be. A country that is bruised but whole, benevolent but bold, fierce and free."

Terrance wrote that he chose those lines because "they mean that this country may be hurt but we will keep fighting no matter what."

Brysen Billie's response to what hill means focused on overcoming challenges. "For example, this year there have been many hard challenges such as Covid-19 and [the] loss of many role models' names [including] Kobe Bryant, Chadwick Boseman and Alex Trebek, but we overcame these challenges and united as a nation."

◆ See POETS on page 2B



Courtesy photo

Poet Maya Angelou at President Clinton's inauguration in 1993.

## Ahfachkee's February projects focus on Black artists, Black Seminole leader

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Americans have been commemorating Black History Month since 1976 and students around the country join the celebration each year with units dedicated to the achievements of Black Americans.

Teachers at the Ahfachkee School used their creativity throughout February to engage students in a variety of projects through virtual schooling.

William H. Johnson

Fourth-grade teacher Sheri-Ann Armentano brought 20th century African American artist William H. Johnson to life for her students through his artwork. Considered a major American artist, Johnson produced thousands of paintings over the course of his career. His painting style evolved from realism to expressionism to folk art style, for which he is best known. The Smithsonian American Art Museum has a substantial collection of his work.

Armentano instructed her class to write an essay and create a portrait based on Johnson's work. The students responded with well-thought-out essays and creative portraits. Here are a few essays:

Audrina Osceola-Turtle: "My artwork represents my love of nature and my culture. Through cultural activities, I can explore the beautiful settings around me and interact with my family and friends through music and dance. The famous American painter, William H. Johnson, inspires me as an artist. He is best known for Folk Art and his depictions of African American subjects within urban life. Folk Art is a form of visual art that represents traditions of native people and their culture.

"Johnson's artwork inspired me to

create two pieces of art titled 'A Dreamer' and 'In the Meadow.' I wanted to create pictures that show the colors and shapes I see on the clothing that represents my Native American culture. Johnson also caught my attention because he makes art look easy. The vivid colors he uses makes his pictures look real. By using shapes, he taught me that you can take something that is ordinary and make it into a masterpiece. He inspires me to continue to grow as an artist through my culture."

Kylie Billie: "Strawberries, oranges, watermelons, Oh my! My grandma's first garden is filled with so many fruits. I can hear her say, 'You must always remember to wash the fruits before eating them, but after you do, they are so juicy and sweet with just a little bit of tartness.'"

"The African American painter, William H. Johnson inspired me to create this portrait of my grandma's garden. The garden holds so much love to me. When I look at the portrait,



Ahfachkee student Audrina Osceola-Turtle's painting "In the Meadow" was done as part of the school honoring Black History Month.

Courtesy Ahfachkee School

I imagine myself sitting next to my grandma amongst all the fruits. I can see my grandma picking fruits to make fruit salad. The lemons are as bright as her dress. I appreciate Johnson's artwork because he reminded me to take the time to think about the people who make a difference in your life, like my grandma."

Adreonna Gore: "William H. Johnson was a big inspiration to me. I had never seen so many bright colors in one painting. He inspired my photo to be the brightest it could be. I love seeing

rainbows outside and anything in nature because that is where the brightest colors are.

"Sometimes you can walk outside after it has been raining all day and see the brightest colors on a rainbow. You can even see water puddles on the ground reflect images that look magical. Mr. Johnson's art represents how art can be like magic; it seems so real like the nature we see every day."

Kalina Cavazos: "William H. Johnson inspired me by using bright colors on the clothing and shapes. It reminded me of all the colors I see every day. My great grandmother uses different techniques to create the patchwork on my Seminole clothing. She uses bright colors and many different shapes to create her masterpieces just like William H. Johnson.

"In Seminole culture we also wear lots of bead accessories and necklaces. Many of the beads are different shapes and of course include so many vibrant colors. Whether it is patchwork or beads, each piece is put in an order to make a pattern. Just like in the painting, William H. Johnson created titled "Children," the hats the woman were wearing remind me of my great grandma's patchwork."

Janessa Clay Martinez: "The African American painter, William H. Johnson inspired me to create this portrait titled 'The Farmer.' In the picture, I wanted to show the love that farmers have for their land. When I look at the picture, I imagine myself sitting in a field and looking up at the blue sky. I appreciate Johnson's artwork because he reminded me to take the time to appreciate nature, like farmers who appreciate their land."

John Horse

Middle school teacher Coralys Roman Anthony's students learned about the life of John Horse and his impact on Black Seminoles during the Seminole Wars. After watching a documentary, students answered a few questions individually.

One question asked for two examples of when Horse showed strength.

"He helped slaves and that he's an African American and back in those times being Black was frowned upon and he still showed white America that he should be feared," wrote eighth grader Nayana Shee Billie.

Another question asked what made Horse a hero.

"They considered him a hero because he saved them from slavery but he also gave them land," wrote sixth grader Curmya Smith.

The next assignment was to write a short story about Horse's life together, as a class, in a pass the story writing prompt. The team project was started by Anthony and went from student to student until everyone in the class contributed to the final story.

"Pass the story is done in the moment," Anthony said. "We all have the presentation open at the same time and they type into it in real time. I'll jolt their thinking and one student types it in."

Anthony spins a wheel to determine who goes next. The project took an entire class period to complete, about 50 minutes. Each of her five classes, with seven to 10 students each, created their own stories.

"They bounce ideas off each other," she said. "It takes the pressure off them to write an entire essay. Together they come up with the final product, it's made as a team."

The following essay was written by Anthony's seventh grade, third period class:

"Not much is known about John Horse's life. He was a leader for the Black Seminoles and he was fierce man that didn't give up. He fought in the Second Seminole War in which the US had the worst defeat at the hands of the Seminole nation.

"He is important to Seminole history because he was a trusted advisor for Chief Osceola and he helped the Seminole nation against the US. He is important to Black history because he led hundreds of Blacks to freedom."

Together the seventh graders from fourth period wrote this essay:

"John Horse was a great leader. He was also brave and fierce. He fought for the Seminoles in the Second Seminole War. He was responsible for the lives of about 200 people. He had married Susan July, the daughter of a Seminole Maroon guide and interpreter. He relocated to Nacimiento, Mexico. He was of mixed heritage. Overall, he is important to the Seminole and Black communities because he helped defend them against enemies and he relocated them as safely as possible."



Ahfachkee student Adreonna Gore's drawing titled "Rainbow Bright."

Courtesy Ahfachkee School

## FSU opts for in-person commencement

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TALLAHASSEE — Florida State University plans to hold in-person commencement ceremonies for its Spring 2021 graduates.

President John Thrasher made the announcement Feb. 25.

"This has been an extraordinary year in many ways, and I've been so impressed by your resilience and flexibility," Thrasher wrote in a letter to graduates. "You have worked through some tremendous challenges in order to graduate. That's why I'm thrilled to announce that Florida State University will celebrate this incredible milestone with in-person commencement ceremonies in April."

The university will hold 11 smaller commencement ceremonies at the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center over the course of two weekends: April 17-18, and April 23-24. Thrasher will serve as the featured speaker at each ceremony. A schedule of ceremony dates and times for each college and department is available at commencement.fsu.edu.

"We plan to retain many elements of our traditional ceremonies while taking the necessary steps to ensure that we can gather in the safest way possible," Thrasher said.

The smaller ceremonies will allow for proper social distancing for graduates who will be seated on the Civic Center floor, as well as four guests per graduate in the audience. Masks will be required for all graduates and guests.

Due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, plans are subject to change.

## Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students of the month - January 2021



## Ahfachkee's 'Ten-Minute Tuesdays' allows students to refocus, reset

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

In some schools, such as Ahfachkee, virtual school has become the norm during the pandemic. Absent from a student's day is being in an actual classroom with teachers and peers.

Replicating social and emotional learning on a computer screen can be challenging, so Ahfachkee guidance counselor Yvonne Thomas created the program "Ten-Minute Tuesdays" for students to step back from academics for a few minutes each week.

"We didn't expect to be doing this a year later, but we've made the most of it," Thomas said. "Social and emotional learning is far more important than academics. If someone is having difficulties, it shows in their academics."

Thomas has fine-tuned her guidance program for virtual classes. She sends a lesson plan for "Ten Minute Tuesday" activities to teachers, complete with an accompanying video, who facilitate it with their classes. Middle and high school students do the program with their homeroom teachers. One example was a yoga program, which proved to be popular.

"We all need to take a few minutes, practice deep breathing and focus on the moment," Thomas said. "It's a reset every Tuesday. The kids like it because they are sitting in front of their computers all day. It gives teachers a chance to refocus, too."

The program is voluntary, but Thomas makes it clear that students may just watch the video if they are not comfortable with the exercises.

"The program is to remind us to be in the present moment, to take a step back," Thomas said.

Students learn the concept of mindfulness during the program. Mindfulness is simply being aware of the present instead of replaying the past or worrying about the future. It helps students learn not to overreact or be overwhelmed by circumstances.

Thomas also adapted her regular 30-minute weekly guidance program to

the virtual format for the entire school. It covers a variety of topics including feelings, kindness, mindfulness, manners, acceptance friendship and growth. Virtual schooling, she said, has its advantages.

"Through WebEx, I have their undivided attention," she said. "We see each other. In a regular classroom, it can be hard to get the kids' attention. Now they don't have the normal distractions of a classroom."

Another advantage is the many resources available to teachers online.

"In the beginning we had to create this virtual environment," she said. "It took a long time to get it all done, but now we are ahead of the game. It will all be there for next year."

A new guidance program will start in the spring for grades 6-12 which will focus on college and career readiness instead of just test preparation for the college entrance exams. Thomas will teach it weekly during homeroom classes.

"She is working very hard to keep our students focused," said Principal Dorothy Cain. "It is especially needed during this time."

Thomas believes the guidance programs are a step in the right direction, but worries there may be some long-term mental health issues from having all classes online. She is also concerned about how the isolation affects children's minds since they are still developing.

"In order to fully develop, you have to have that social interaction," said Thomas, who was recently certified in mental health first aid from the National Council for Behavioral Health. "We are social beings and social isolation isn't the norm. That is why these programs and providing resources are so important. The tribe does a really good job of promoting the mental health resources they have available, so everyone who needs help can get it."

Thomas tries to be positive about every situation.

"I'm so proud of my team," she said. "We started from zero and didn't even have our website up to date. We have progressed tremendously and come a long way. The kids really motivate us."

## Online petition asks for Cree language to be added to Google Translate

BY JOHN CHIDLEY-HILL  
Canadian Press

Montreal-based publisher Joseph John wanted his comic book "Citizen Canada" to reflect the country's diverse history by having the titular hero speak English, French and Cree.

But when he started entering the Indigenous superhero's dialogue into Google Translate he found that Cree, the most common First Nations language in Canada, is not an option on the app.

John then took it upon himself to create an online petition urging Google to make Cree available on its translation app. A user-experience designer by trade, the publisher said he wants to help preserve the Indigenous language.

"I'm not an activist, I'm just a ... designer," said John. "Making comics has always been my passion (but) I want my comic to be especially helpful to Indigenous people, I want to help First Nations peoples."

The preamble to John's petition points out that Maori, the language of Aboriginal people in New Zealand, is available on Google Translate. New Zealand government data suggests there are approximately 50,000 Maori speakers there, but data from Statistics Canada's 2016 census shows there were more than 29,000 Cree speakers in Canada when information was gathered.

Simon Bird -- the creator of Cree Simon Says, a Facebook group with more than 20,000 followers that teaches people how to speak the First Nations language -- said he would welcome the addition of his native language to Google Translate as a tool for beginner or intermediate speakers.

"Once there's a common understanding

of the language between a fluent speaker and someone that doesn't know the language at all, I think that's going to be the real benefit," said Bird, who is also the director of education for Lac La Ronge Indian Band in Saskatchewan.

Cree, part of the Algonquin language family, has nine dialects that are spoken in a vast geographic region that stretches from Labrador to Alberta and the Northwest Territories, according to figures from the territorial government.

Bird said although there are certain modern words that differ between the various Cree dialects, the heart of the language is the same across Canada.

Molly Morgan, a spokeswoman for Google, said that Cree is among the many Indigenous languages included in the company's Noto font project but added incorporating it into the Translate app is a more complicated process.

"We're gradually adding languages over time but our system needs lots of examples to learn from," said Morgan. "Unfortunately we don't have a timeline for that specific language. The process of adding a language to Translate takes a big concerted effort from contributors."

John, who emigrated from Bangalore, India, in 2007, said he hopes that his comic will help his fellow immigrants better understand First Nations people. He hopes that "Citizen Canada" will help them understand the difference between First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples.

"I don't want people to think of Indigenous people as tragic or victims or any of that, I want them to think of them as superheroes," said John.

scheme and the imagery of the poem.

Students used worksheets to answer questions about Angelou's life. Terrance wrote about the poet's struggles.

"Her struggles in life was her parents split and she was sent to live with her dad's mom. She suffered first-hand racial discrimination and she became mute. Her writing themes are confidence, strength, human spirit and beauty," Terrance wrote.

Another student, Annaleise, wrote that Angelou was not afraid at all and told other people not to be afraid. She had a tough childhood, but when she grew up she wrote "Life Doesn't Frighten Me." Annaleise wrote that the poet was not afraid of life any more.

"Virtual class is quite different, so I create Google slides for them and screen sharing," Wills explained. "I think they are thinking about things they may not have thought about before. I like to use different sources and find things that are current and relevant."

It often takes students two or three times as long to learn something during distance learning, Wills said. She is careful not to overwhelm them and avoids making school work seem unmanageable.

"I keep trying to motivate them and encourage them," she said. "This is really about their thoughts, it isn't citing information and calculations. I try to have them not second guess themselves, but to get them to believe in themselves. I want them to feel free to express themselves."



Clockwise from top left, Joseph P. Gone, Philip J. Deloria, Greg Sarris, K. Tsianina Lomawaima, Henrietta Mann and Robert Warrior hold a panel discussion sponsored by the Harvard University Native American Program and the Stanford Native American Studies Program on Feb. 11.

## Native American scholars provide insight into Indigenous education

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

To honor the 50th anniversary of Harvard University's Native American Program and Stanford University's American Indian Cultural Center on Feb. 11, the institutions hosted a panel of five Native American scholars who spoke about the state of Indigenous studies.

The panelists also discussed their own journeys through the labyrinth of higher education. All are inductees in the American Academy of Arts & Sciences (AAAS), which has had more than 13,500 members since its founding in 1780. The panelists are among the few Native Americans members of the AAAS.

Philip J. Deloria (Yankton Dakota), the Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History at Harvard University, is part of a cohort of people who pushed for an Indigenous presence in the AAAS.

"It's important to me to think about the national American story and how Native people can contest that story at every turn, to seize control of it and keep our own independent stories going," Deloria said during the webinar. "Rethinking national narratives is an important project. There are new ways to tell the stories and grab audiences who don't think about Native people, but when they do it isn't in positive ways. There are deep stories of Indigenous peoples on all lands that haven't been heard. We need to facilitate that."

K. Tsianina Lomawaima (Muskogee/Creek Nation), a Stanford alumna and retired professor at Arizona State University, talked about the importance of sharing stories. She grew up hearing her father's stories and realized everyone learns, teaches, matures and finds their place in the world through stories.

"It is important to look after one another, share our stories and spread the word to larger audiences," she said. "Native or non-Native, look to the ground beneath your feet or the oceans beneath your sails. See your ancestors, yourself and those who come after you. Ideas and stories spring from the earth and the waves to give us life. For that, we should be grateful."

Lomawaima believes there is a historical divide between higher education institutions and the Indigenous world.

"Indigenous studies play a critical role in public education and can serve as pathways for non-Natives to encounter the historical truth of the nation they call home," she said. "The contemporary vitality of Native people, ideas and sovereignty percolate through our classes and impact Native nations."

Robert Warrior (Osage Nation), a professor of American literature and culture at the University of Kansas, talked about the difficulty of being a minority in academia. While he was a professor at Stanford in 1999, he was denied tenure and had a hard

time coming to terms with it. Then he found out about the death of an Indigenous woman by rebels in Colombia and realized that people in many places in the Indigenous world were struggling against greater odds than he faced.

"Our histories are ones in which people fought like hell while looking into an abyss that had no discernable end," said Warrior, who is the founding president of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. "Our successes, stumbles and failures as Indigenous scholars are connected to the lives of others. Those of us who take this work of scholarship seriously learn early on a similar lesson about the intellectual work we do."

During a friend's visit during that time, he was reminded that what he achieved was greater than one institution's judgement of it.

"It made me realize that however high an institution's standards are, my own standards for my work are higher," Warrior said. "That was the biggest favor I did for myself back then, making the commitment to strive to reach the standards I set for myself. That is my first and best priority. If I can achieve that goal, I will always know for myself something that the affirmations of others cannot provide. At times I come up short, but when I do I know where to go to find my way."

Greg Sarris, Tribal Chairman of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (Coast Miwok) and endowed chair in creative writing and Native American studies at Sonoma State University, talked about his history in education.

"I didn't read a book until I was in the 11th grade," Sarris said. "I began studying because I didn't want to be a busboy or work in the fields or horse ranches or dairy farms. I thought I'd get rich and be a businessman. But what happened when I began studying was the biggest shock of my life; that was being separated from my community, family and friends. I had to sit alone with a lightbulb reading a book. I persevered and in the process, I fell in love with literature and reading. It reminded me of what I knew from home, which were stories."

He attended the University of California at Los Angeles and the writing program at Stanford, where he wrote about urban Indians.

"They couldn't relate to the idea that an Indian was somebody besides a person on a pinto horse chasing buffalos," Sarris said.

After earning a doctorate from Stanford, Sarris became a professor at UCLA "so I'd have a roof over my head," he said.

His tribe has about 1,400 members, but at first contact with outsiders they were more than 20,000 strong. All tribal members today are descended from just four survivors. In the early 1990s some elders asked him to get the tribe's federal recognition back, which was terminated by the government in 1958. He fought to get a bill passed and the tribe's federal recognition was finally restored in

2000 by an Act of Congress. In 2013, the tribe opened the Graton Resort & Casino in 2013, whose financial benefit has helped spur education in the tribe.

"It is a successful casino," Sarris said. "Before, 80% of our kids dropped out of high school; now 100% graduate. They can go to the college of their choice, paid for by the tribe."

Henrietta Mann (Cheyenne) is professor emerita of Native American studies at the University of Montana, Missoula and Montana State University, Bozeman. She is also an elder and retired professor who said she is fortunate to live in a time where "Indigenous people continue to give life to intellectual giants who integrate our grandparents' wisdom into the university classroom."

"I'm pleased [Harvard and Stanford] honor the views and philosophies of Native American Indigenous scholarship that represents countless generations of knowledge that is but a droplet of the accumulated wisdom passed down for as long as our ancestors have walked this land," Mann said. "Our Indigenous life ways encompass the entire universe and provides a fertile field in the study of life."

Mann believes Native American studies programs are significant in their basic mission, which is to educate Indigenous youth with appropriate cultural knowledge taught from their frame of reference. Although Indigenous people have always emphasized the importance of education, she noted the 1969 Kennedy Report which concluded the education of Indian children was a national tragedy and a national challenge and called for Indian involvement in their education. The study offered 60 recommendations for improving Indian education, including an emphasis on Native culture and history, and led to the Indian Education Act of 1972.

"Self-determination eventually led to the formation of tribal colleges and universities," Mann said. "This land's original teachers are the elders; they teach us we live in a mutually dependent and interrelated universe."

She said Indigenous scholars can benefit their nations directly, which can educate future Indigenous scholars by preserving their stories, working with governments to create language programs, protecting sacred sites and documenting tribal ecological knowledge to forestall critical effects of climate change.

"We have unending stewardship responsibilities to the earth," Mann said. "When our students leave a university, they should carry with them more than a degree. They should possess essential leadership skills, understand contemporary Native American life, be knowledgeable of tribal sovereignty and be positive and hopeful about their futures. They need to remember that they come from great peoples who have an enduring presence on this land."

## Florida State alumni podcast debuts

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**TALLAHASSEE** — The Florida State University Alumni Association is bringing the FSU campus to alumni around the world with "Echoes: The FSU Alumni Podcast," developed to create an on-the-go show to keep alumni connected to each other and the university.

Keith Cottrell, director of Seminole Clubs, will serve as host. Each episode will feature a "Campus Conversation" segment meant to reconnect alumni with staff, faculty and friends of the university. The first episode debuted Feb. 16 with Eva Killings, a member of the campus community for more than 45 years.

"Our alumni share many of the same favorite stories, traditions and locations on

campus and look forward to experiencing those again when they return to campus or attend an event locally," Julie Decker, president and CEO of the FSU Alumni Association, said in a statement. "This podcast lets them experience a piece of FSU from wherever they are."

The association's virtual engagements in 2020 led to developing a podcast to provide FSU alumni with more digital programming.

"We've seen tremendous participation in our webinars and Zoom events since the pandemic began," said Keith Warburg, the association's director of communications. "But one thing our alumni kept asking for was a way to stay connected casually on their own schedule, whether at the gym, on the train or after the kids go to sleep."

Warburg said that creating this podcast

has been a long and exciting process of finding interesting conversations, sharing opportunities to get involved with service and social events and capturing the essence of the FSU campus in audio format.

Season one will consist of 10 episodes in Spring 2021, featuring conversations with Eva Killings, Seminole Dining employee; Dan Berger (B.S. '89), chair of the FSU Alumni Association national board of directors; Andy Jhanji, interim vice president for university advancement; and Clay Ingram (B.S. '00), chief legislative affairs officer.

"Echoes: The FSU Alumni Podcast" will be available on iTunes, Spotify and other podcast platforms each Tuesday from Feb. 16-Apr. 20. For more information, visit [alumni.fsu.edu/echoes](http://alumni.fsu.edu/echoes).

## NIEA convention to be held in October

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Indian Education Association's 52nd annual convention and trade show will be held Oct. 13-16 at the Omaha Convention Center in Omaha, Nebraska.

This year's theme is "Native Control of Native Education: A Time to Lead."

NIEA is accepting proposals for workshops, research presentations and poster sessions focused on innovative strategies to support the implementation of culture-based pedagogy, asset-based methods for teaching and development, equitable curriculum and instruction, digital learning, community partnership development, and trauma-informed educational practices to create safe

and successful learning environments for students. NIEA stated it is also committed to highlighting any sessions that include direct response and support strategies for COVID related issues.

For more information and to register go to [niea.org](http://niea.org).

## ◆ POETS From page 1B

Why did Brysen think Gorman chose to write and recite this poem for the Inauguration?

Brysen wrote: "She wants us to all be kind to each other, respect each other, treat each other fairly and we must learn from the poem and not judge but compliment others. Don't be disrespectful, be respectful and treat others how you want to be treated."

Zayden Cypress chose the line "When day comes we step out of the shade aflame and unafraid" and explained his choice. "When I read this line it means to me that we stand up to people."

Wills introduced Gorman's poem and talked about her being named the first youth poet laureate and what it meant to be just 22 years old with an upbringing in which the odds were stacked against her.

"I want them to see younger role models and say that could be me," Wills said. "Anything is possible with commitment and dedication. Gorman had a speech impediment and worked to overcome it. She practiced and rehearsed and didn't let it get her down."

The class also studied Angelou's life and poems. They watched the poet read her inaugural poem long before any of them were born. They also analyzed the more age-appropriate poem "Life Doesn't Frighten Me." During the process, students learned to discern who the speaker is, the rhyme



# EVERY STUDENT HAS A STORY.

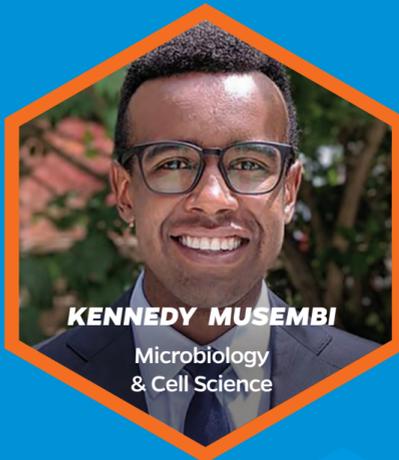
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# All Indigenous film to premiere in May

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The digital programming lineup for Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater in Washington, D.C., includes the premiere in May of “Indigenous Earth Voices.” The film explores the people’s relationship to the Earth.

All of the artists involved in the film, including actors, directors, interviewees and playwrights, are Indigenous.

The film features six stories from locations throughout Canada and the United States focusing on subsistence, family traditions, land rights, myths and legends, regalia, tribal rituals, treaties and issues that impact Indigenous cultures.

These stories, written by six playwrights, are based upon interviews with tribal leaders and storytellers from many different tribes across Canada and the United States. The interviewees come from the tribes of Cherokee, Cree in Canada, Cup’ik Eskimo in Alaska, Lakota, Piscataway, Shoshone, Zuni and others.

The Indigenous playwrights include:

**Tara Beagan** is a Ntlaka’pamux and Irish “Canadian” half-breed. She is cofounder/codirector of ARTICLE 11 with Andy Moro. ARTICLE 11 has worked across Turtle Island, in Aotearoa, Australia and Scotland and is based in Mohkinstsis (Calgary.) Beagan served as Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts (Toronto) from February 2011 to December 2013. She’s been in residence at Cahoots (Toronto), NEPA, the National Arts Centre (Ottawa), Berton House (Dawson City) and is now at Prairie Theatre Exchange (Winnipeg.) Seven of her 32 plays are published.

**Lee Cataluna** was born and raised in Hawaii and is of Native Hawaiian descent. Recent projects for the stage include Ipu for Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Home of the Brave for La Jolla Playhouse, Flowers of Hawaii at Native Voices at the Autry and Mudpies and Magic at Honolulu Theatre for Youth. Her books include Folks You Meet at Longs and the children’s book Ordinary ‘Ohana. She has an MFA in Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts from University of California, Riverside.

**Dillon Chitto** is a Native American of Mississippi Choctaw, Laguna and Isleta Pueblo descent. He grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he learned the importance of art, culture and traditions from his family. In his playwrighting, he connects these themes using storytelling techniques learned throughout his life. He is presently in Chicago, Illinois and is currently a company member of BoHo Theatre where he is an artistic administrator. He was selected as Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program’s 2017 winning playwright. He has also worked with Global Voices theatre project in London as well as Theater Above the Law in Chicago. He was recently selected as a resident for AlterTheater’s 2020 AlterLab cohort.

**Mary Kathryn Nagle** is an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation. She is also a partner at Pipstem Law, P.C., where she works to protect tribal sovereignty and the inherent right of Indian Nations to protect their women and children from domestic violence and sexual assault. From 2015 to 2019, she served as the first Executive Director of the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program. Nagle is an alum of the 2013 Public Theater Emerging Writers Program. Productions include Miss Lead (Amerinda, 59E59), Fairly Traceable (Native Voices at the Autry), Sovereignty (Arena Stage), Manahatta (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), Return to Niobrara (Rose Theater), Crossing Misnoise (Portland Center Stage), Sovereignty (Marin Theatre Company) and Manahatta (Yale Repertory Theatre).

**Frank Henry Kaash Katasse** is from the Tsaagweidi clan. Frank is an actor, director, producer, improviser, educator, author and playwright. Frank received his Bachelor’s in Theatre Arts from the University of Hawai’i: Mānoa. Frank served as Board President of Juneau/Douglas Little Theatre (2013-2019), a Perseverance Theatre company member (2008-present) and the Playwright in Residence for Theater Alaska (2020-present). In 2017, Perseverance Theatre produced (along with Native Voices at the Autry and La Jolla Playhouse) the rolling world premiere of Katasse’s play They Don’t Talk Back. Frank has also developed two full length plays, Where the Summit Meets the Stars and Spirit of the Valley, as the Playwright in Residence (2018). Frank currently lives in Douglas, AK with his wife and two kids.

**Madeline Sayet** is a citizen of the Mohegan Tribe, the Executive Director of the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program (YIPAP) and Co-Artistic Director of Red Eagle Soaring: Native Youth Theater. For her work as a theater maker, she has been honored as a Forbes 30 Under 30, TED Fellow, MIT Media Lab Director’s Fellow, National Directing Fellow, Native American 40 Under 40 and a recipient of The White House Champion of Change Award from President Obama. Her play, Where We Belong, first shown in London at Shakespeare’s Globe, will have its U.S. premiere in Washington, D.C., as part of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company’s current season.

For more information visit arenastage.org.

# Book highlights Native American contribution to comedy

FROM PRESS RELEASE

It was one of the most reliable jokes in Charlie Hill’s stand-up routine: “My people are from Wisconsin. We used to be from New York. We had a little real estate problem.”

In “We Had a Little Real Estate Problem,” acclaimed comedy historian Kliph Nesteroff focuses on one of comedy’s most significant and little-known stories: how, despite having been denied representation in the entertainment industry, Native Americans have influenced and advanced the art form.

The account begins in the late 1880s, when Native Americans were forced to tour in wild west shows as an alternative to prison. (One modern comedian said it was as “if a Guantanamo detainee suddenly had to appear on X-Factor.”) This is followed by a detailed look at the life and work of seminal figures such as Cherokee humorist Will Rogers and Hill, who in the 1970s was the first Native American comedian to appear on The Tonight Show.

Also profiled are several contemporary comedians, including Jonny Roberts, a social worker from the Red Lake Nation who drives five hours to the closest comedy club to pursue his stand-up dreams; Kiowa-Apache comic Adrienne Chalepah, who formed the touring group the Native Ladies of Comedy;



Author Kliph Nesteroff

and the 1491s, a sketch troupe whose satire is smashing stereotypes to critical acclaim. As Ryan Red Corn, the Osage member of the 1491s, says: “The American narrative dictates that Indians are supposed to be sad. It’s not really true and it’s not indicative of the community experience itself...Laughter and joy is very much a part of Native culture.”

Here’s a sample of reviews:

Jason Zinoman, New York Times: “[Nesteroff] has carved out a niche as the premier popular historian of comedy because of his knack for unearthing such forgotten stories...[We Had a Little Real Estate Problem] provides context for an argument about the importance of representation.”

Film director, comedian Judd Apatow: “Kliph Nesteroff explores an overlooked side of comedy in We Had a Little Real Estate Problem. From its account of Native American marginalization to the Cherokee roots of Will Rogers, from the inspiring story of Charlie Hill to the new wave of young, hilarious, Indigenous comedians, this book is a game changer.”—Judd Apatow

Philip J. Deloria, Harvard University: “Stuck with living out contradictions between what America says and what it

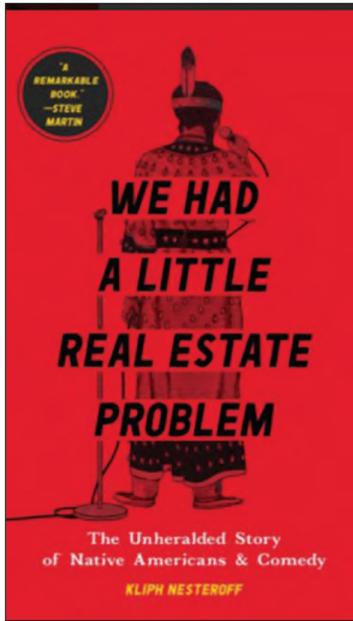
# Joy Harjo will be Smith College’s commencement speaker

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**NORTHAMPTON, Mass.** — Joy Harjo—the 23rd United States Poet Laureate, and the first Native American named to that role—will deliver the address at Smith College’s commencement ceremony on May 30.

Harjo will receive an honorary degree at the event.

Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Harjo is an award-winning poet, writer, performer and saxophone player of the Mvskoke/Creek Nation. As the first Native American to be named U.S. Poet Laureate, she launched “Living Nations, Living Words,” a website designed to introduce readers to the many Native poets in the U.S. Harjo is the author of nine books of poetry, including the acclaimed “An American Sunrise,” as well



Simon & Schuster

“We Had a Little Real Estate Problem” was released by Simon & Schuster in February.

does, Native people transformed a hard world of irony into one of wry and satirical humor. Kliph Nesteroff takes readers on a journey through this uncharted Indian comic world—its pasts and presents, legendary heroes and rising stars, insider jokes and desperate performances. The result is a fascinating and rich picture of the life-affirming, revolutionary practices of Native comedy.”

The 336-page book is available through Simon & Schuster, Amazon and others.

# ‘Wild Indian’ offers a glimpse into generational trauma

BY MONICA WHITEPIGEON  
Native News Online

Native people in cinema have been categorized into stereotypical and inconsequential roles, which has created a gap in Native-centric films that allow for any worthwhile character development. Some Native filmmakers are working to break away from historical settings and cultivate more fleshed out storylines for contemporary Native protagonists. For Sundance Institute alum, writer and director Lyle Mitchell Corbine Jr. (Shinaab), it was a necessity to show audiences the inner workings of Native minds, even the more questionable characters.

Corbine premiered his debut film “Wild Indian” at this year’s Sundance Film Festival. The film stars Plains Cree actor Michael Greyeyes (“True Detective”), Lakota actor Chaske Spencer (“Barkskins”), Kate Bosworth (“The Long Road Home”) and Jesse Eisenberg (“Zombieland”).

The 87-minute drama focuses on two Anishinaabe cousins that became involved in the cover-up of a murder committed during their adolescence. Makwa/Michael and Ted-O grow up to lead polar opposite lives all the while dealing with their inner demons in different ways.

Originally from Garrison, Minn. and a member of the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa, Corbine wanted to reconnect with his regional background for the story. The film’s characters are loosely based on Corbine’s family members, especially for Ted-O’s adult appearance,

while he took more liberties with the darker themes of the plot. Murder was not based on an actual incident but hints at the ongoing missing persons cases throughout reservations.

“I was feeling a little bit out of touch when I moved away from my reservation. I kind of felt like I was living not like a lie, but I was just living a very different life than I had grown with so I was just writing down feelings about that,” Corbine explained during a panel with The Atlantic.

Broken into three distinct sections, the feature tackles the intergenerational trauma that resonates for many Native people. Beginning with a sickly, lone Native man wandering in the woods, he speaks in Ojibwe believing himself to be the last of a dying tribe. The audience is then taken to the 1980s and introduced to Makwa, a bullied Anishinaabe boy from an abusive family, and his confidant Ted-O, who teaches him how to shoot. As the movie progresses to the present day, Corbine’s writing and cinematography further contextualizes the trauma the two main characters witness and have to live with into adulthood.

Young M’Chigeeng First Nation actor Phoenix Wilson (“Indian Horse”) portrays the soft-spoken Makwa in a way that exemplifies the frustration of preteens as he attempts to bring his own sense of justice to his dire situations. Greyeyes plays off of his younger version to deliver a daunting performance as a middle-aged, successful businessman who changed his name to Michael.

“As an actor I felt an absolute need to be unafraid to deal with the kind of violence

that I think we all see in our lives, lives around us. And for a long time, Hollywood portrayed us in grotesque ways and in this case with Lyle’s sure-hand and with a cast that I loved, I felt safe to reclaim that kind of portrayal and recontextualize it in our terms,” Greyeyes said.

“This examination of whatever system you’re talking about, you know Manifest Destiny, racism, colonialism and trauma, work its way through our bodies and across our bodies all the time. And when I saw the final cut of the film I realized (Lyle) created this poem using these images, using our bodies.”

His character addresses concerns of assimilation, represented through his career and marriage, and his unspoken need to maintain some sort of cultural connection via his home décor and long hair. Michael hides in plain sight as he represses his violent urges and distances himself emotionally from his wife (Bosworth) and his coworker (Eisenberg).

“From Greta’s perspective, I often read (the script) through the lens of kind of love and self-love and lack of that and sort of shame and how an upbringing or an experience can affect a person,” said Bosworth.

“Every single beat and every word that I read was really like straight piercing to the soul and whether it was horrific or poignant or poetic or whatever Lyle wanting to communicate it was just very, very honest.”

Eisenberg, who is also an executive producer, was immediately drawn to the project and made himself available to Corbine.

# Ojibwe author Angeline Bouley on the ‘Indigenous Nancy Drew’ story in her debut thriller

BY STATESIDE/MICHIGAN RADIO

Angeline Bouley’s debut young adult novel opens with a heart-pounding scene: a girl stands frozen in the woods, staring down the barrel of a gun.

Over the course of the book, Michigan author Bouley revisits this dramatic scene, each time adding just a little more context and gradually unraveling the novel’s mystery. The result is an elegantly-paced, emotionally complex thriller called “Firekeeper’s Daughter.” It’s making a splash with teen and adult audiences alike — and it hasn’t even hit the shelves yet.

Bouley is an enrolled member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and she’s currently based in Southwest Michigan. But “Firekeeper’s Daughter,” which will be released March 16, is set in the places where Bouley grew up in the Upper Peninsula.

“I’m really proud to have a story that’s set in my tribal community in Michigan,” Bouley said. “It’s almost like the location becomes a character. It plays an integral part in the story.”

The book’s protagonist is 18-year-old

Ojibwe student Daunis Fontaine, who’s navigating the complexity of her identity as a biracial, unenrolled tribal member while balancing school, sports, and the aftermath of a recent family tragedy. Not long after a charming, but mysterious, athlete catches Daunis’ eye, she witnesses a murder. As she follows a twisting path of intrigue and romance, Daunis pursues the truth of what’s happening in her community — and the truth of who she is.

Bouley says she grew up loving mysteries and thrillers, but the stories rarely featured characters who looked like her or shared her experiences.

“It wasn’t until I was a senior in high school that I read a book where the protagonist was Native, and had a Native father and a non-Native mother. And I was just stunned,” she said. “Once I saw it, I realized, wait, I haven’t seen this before, and why is that?”

Bouley says that elements of the novel started taking shape in her mind decades ago, when, as a student, she found out about an undercover drug bust at a nearby high school. She later served as the Director of the Office of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of Education, and she says her

experiences working with teens in tribal communities also helped influence how she built the narrative in “Firekeeper’s Daughter,” which she spent more than a decade developing.

“Kids were still hearing the same things that I heard when I was growing up about, you know, oh, you don’t look Indian, or not being Indian enough,” she said. “My daughter was a preteen at the time, about 12 years ago, when I decided to write this Indigenous “Nancy Drew” story. And that’s how it all started.”

The novel deals with some serious subject matter, so it might not be suited for all young readers. And while the book is officially part of the YA genre, many adult readers will find this thriller gripping and powerful, too.

“Young adult stories are about coming of age and discovering who you are and finding your place in the world or in your community,” Bouley said. “When you’re biracial, that adds another element that other people might not understand. And, you know, it gets into things like colorism and microaggressions and code switching and all of these things of, ‘How is my identity perceived by others, and at what point does

# Comedian show at Hard Rock Stadium

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**MIAMI GARDENS** — Hard Rock Stadium will host South Florida native and comedian Brian Regan at the venue’s first-ever live comedy show on April 17 at 7 p.m. The event will take place in the socially-distant open-air theater and can host up to 700 guests in small groups for an intimate viewing experience. Masks must be worn at all times and can only be removed while actively eating or drinking. For tickets visit [HardRockStadium.com/brian-regan](http://HardRockStadium.com/brian-regan).

# 2 Texas men plead guilty to illegally excavating artifacts from Native cultural sites

FROM WFAA

Two Texas men pleaded guilty to illegally excavating about 1,500 artifacts from federal land, according to acting U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas Prerak Shah.

Jeffrey Vance, 37, of San Marcos, and Dax Wheatley, 32, of Amarillo, pleaded guilty to violating the Archeological Resources Protection Act, a release from Shah’s office said.

In March of 2019, the Bureau of Land Management received a tip that an illegal excavation had occurred on a Native American cultural site at the Cross Bar Management Area, just north of Amarillo, Texas, federal officials said in a release Friday.

Local officials determined the illegal excavation happened at a former homestead of the Antelope Creek Culture, at a site known as 4IPT109, Shah said. Native Americans lived in the Texas panhandle between approximately 1200 and 1500 A.D.

A Bureau of Land Management agent received a tip that someone, later identified as Vance, had posted photos of the illegal excavation on social media, the release said.

“I’m most curious about stories that depict cultures that I don’t know enough about. And as Lyle said, my character is kind of like the metaphor,” Eisenberg said.

“He’s kind of like whatever Lyle conceived through Makwa’s eyes of the kind of upwardly mobile white guy who’s quite happy and seems to be self-actualized in a shallow way. I wanted to support that because I want to support stories like that. So even though as an actor in some ways it feels like a diminished (role), it actually adds to the movie in such a wonderful way.”

Even more so, Spencer’s depiction of the troubled Ted-O proved captivating throughout each scene. Ted-O is presented as a tattoo-covered convict, who tries to reconnect with his family. Spencer’s raw expressiveness highlighted the humanity behind his seemingly unapproachable character, who lost his innocence long ago, but still desires tenderness and love.

“With Ted-O, I knew I had to bring some type of sensitivity because his exterior was so big with the tattoos, coming out of jail and the shaved head. And so my job is to make sure that I made him human and more sensitive and very present and very guilt ridden for what he had done,” Spencer said.

“Wild Indian” offers a visceral look into the lives and motives of contemporary Native people, both on and off the Rez. Every character must face his or her own challenges with an underlying need to simply survive. A theme that is all too real for many Indigenous people.

“I hope that people walk away knowing a little bit more about what goes on in the hearts of Native people,” Corbine said.

it come from within me?”

Bouley says she’s hoping teen readers of “Firekeeper’s Daughter,” especially those who are biracial, can see themselves reflected in the story and its characters.

“Identity is such a powerful theme in stories, because for all of the readers, all the teens out there who have felt that — living in both worlds, or not enough, or whatever struggles they go with, to feel seen in a story, I think that can do wonders for your self-identity,” she said. “I think that books and stories can do so much to help young people.”

“Firekeeper’s Daughter” will be published March 16. A Netflix series adaptation of the book is already in the works, too — it’s set for development with Higher Ground Productions, President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama’s production company.

This post was written by Stateside production assistant Nell Oviitt.

# Sports



## Tribal trio propels Okeechobee to historic season

*District championship, first regional playoff win since 1979 highlight memorable year*

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

After Okeechobee High School girls basketball coach Jovanny Torres handed the district championship trophy to his players, it seemed as if everyone wanted to touch it.

Who could blame them? Throughout its long history, the program hasn't exactly filled up trophy cases. Nobody could remember the Brahman's girls basketball team winning a district title, at least not in the past quarter century or so. So the players basked in a spotlight they earned by walloping Fort Pierce's Westwood Academy, 50-13, in the Class 5A-District 13 championship Feb. 5 in front of about 100 mask-wearing spectators at Jensen Beach High School.

After receiving the championship trophy from Torres, the players, which include the Seminole Tribe's Adryauna Baker, Caylie Huff and Haylie Huff, swarmed around it and took plenty of photos amid friends and family.

Until Torres became head coach a few years ago, the program went decades without ever attaining much notoriety. Now the program, which includes the tribe's Kalisa Baker as assistant varsity coach and head JV coach, has built a strong foundation that is producing winning seasons and tournament appearances.

"For us to come and change that and not only get the No. 1 (district) seed and bring home a district title, I couldn't be more proud of my girls," Torres said.

After losing only two seniors from last season's team, Okeechobee figured it would be in the thick of the chase for a district title this season. Like a puzzle, the pieces were in place; they just needed to be connected.



From left, the Seminole Tribe trio of Caylie Huff, Adryauna Baker and Haylie Huff hold the Class 5A-District 13 trophy after the Okeechobee High School Brahman's defeated Westwood, 50-13, in the championship Feb. 5 at Jensen Beach High School.

"We knew we needed a little bit of work on our team chemistry, but we got the hang of it as we went along," said Adryauna Baker, a junior guard who averaged 10 points and a team-high 5.1 rebounds per game this season.

Baker and Haylie Huff each finished with four points in the district final. Defensively, they made their presence felt in the paint. Baker snagged a game-high seven rebounds to match her season high. She also contributed with three steals, two assists and a block. Huff, a senior who had a career-high five rebounds in a district semifinal win against Boynton Beach, had two rebounds and excelled at making it difficult

for Westwood players to get solid position near the basket. Caylie Huff, the team's only other senior, entered the game in the fourth quarter and finished with two assists.

The Brahman's weren't done celebrating. Six days later they won a regional playoff game for the first time since 1979 thanks in large part to Baker, who excelled in several areas. She had 11 rebounds, seven points, six steals, three assists and two blocks to lead the Brahman's past Northeast-Oakland Park, 40-37, in overtime in a Class 5A-Region 4 quarterfinal at Okeechobee High School.

"She took over in overtime with an amazing crossover that made the defender fall and then finished the layup through two

defenders to finish the play. Then right when they inbounded the ball she stole it right back and drove hard to the lane and [caused] another foul," Torres said.

The team's spirited run ended Feb. 16 when national powerhouse American Heritage-Plantation rolled to a 57-27 home win in a regional semifinal. Heritage, with the University of Florida-bound 6-foot-2 Wyche sisters, went on to capture its fourth straight state championship.

After the loss to Heritage, Torres emphasized to his team that there was no reason to sulk.

"I told the girls I don't want to see anybody with their heads down," Torres

said. "That's a team that has University of Florida commits on it, and we came out here and fought. We got freshmen driving to the hole against these big seniors, getting 'and-1 calls.'"

Indeed, Okeechobee wasn't shy about taking the ball to the hoop, even with the 6-foot-2 Gator-bound twins Taliyah and Tatyana Wyche in their way. When Baker drove the lane for a layup that trimmed Heritage's lead to 10-6 midway through the first quarter, Okeechobee showed it wouldn't go away quietly. However, the Brahman's didn't make enough first shots, which was critical because second chances were sparse. Turnovers also proved to be pivotal.

"We played a great game, but we got a little stage fright when they ran their press," Torres said. "Instead of trying to run our press break, we tried to dribble through it"

Baker finished with five points. She helped keep the game close early with two steals, one block and a layup in the first four minutes of the opening quarter. She scored four of the team's first six points.

The loss certainly didn't tarnish what the Brahman's accomplished. In addition to the district title and regional quarterfinal win, the team won its first nine games of the season. Under Torres, who is also the athletic director at Pemaquett Emahakv Charter School, the Brahman's have generated a 33-11 record the past two seasons. They should be strong again next season as nearly the entire roster – including Baker and leading scorer Jasmine Shanks – will be back.

The team has only two seniors, the Huff sisters, neither of whom made the trip to Plantation.

Throughout the season the Huffs came off the bench to provide valuable minutes. Caylie was a shooting threat, especially from long range, and a strong defender, while Haylie won a lot of battles in the paint vying for rebounds.

Before shifting attention to next year, Torres hopes his players appreciate what they accomplished this year.

"I don't think they realize how great a season they actually had. They're so modest," he said.



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee's Haylie Huff wins a battle for a loose ball against Westwood in the Class 5A-District 13 championship Feb. 5 at Jensen Beach High School. Okeechobee won, 50-13.



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee's Adryauna Baker drives toward the basket against American Heritage's Taliyah Wyche, a University of Florida signee, during the Brahman's final game of the season, a 57-27 loss in a Class 5A-Region 4 semifinal Feb. 16 in Plantation.



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee's Caylie Huff attempts to block a pass on defense during the Brahman's district championship victory against Westwood at Jensen Beach High School.



Kevin Johnson (2)  
At left, Adryauna Baker receives instruction from coach Jovanny Torres during the regional semifinal in Plantation. The assistant coach on the bench is Kalisa Baker, who is also the junior varsity head coach. At right, it's time for the celebration to begin as Okeechobee players cheer on their teammates in the waning moments of the district championship game.





**VIRTUAL REZ RALLY 2021 RESULTS**

Female 18-24	REZ	STEPS
1. Cheyenne Kippenberger	HWD	509,485
2. Lindsey Posada	IMK/Naples	433,965
3. Christina Clark	BRT/Tampa	429,555

Female 25-30	REZ	STEPS
1. Hali Garcia	HWD	836,912
2. Phaydra Clark	BRT/Tampa	785,688
3. Deidra Hall	IMK/Naples	513,687

Female 31-35	REZ	STEPS
1. Nina Frias	HWD	1,174,359
2. Whitney Tucker	HWD	679,712
3. Courtney Muro	HWD	660,909

Female 36-40	REZ	STEPS
1. Melissa Billie	HWD	896,165
2. LaShara Thomas	HWD	859,988
3. Leatrice Cypress	BC	402,186

Female 41-45	REZ	STEPS
1. Marcella Billie	HWD	984,269
2. Melissa DeMayo	HWD	640,354
3. Lorraine Posada	IMK/Naples	525,036

Female 46-50	REZ	STEPS
1. Debbie Henry	BRT/Tampa	645,970
2. Michelle Mullins	HWD	566,500
3. Joletta John Carney	HWD	470,679

Female 51-55	REZ	STEPS
1. Eteau Huggins	HWD	717,000
2. Helena Cypress	HWD	526,685
3. Almira Billie	BC	471,613

Female 56-60	REZ	STEPS
1. Bonnie Motlow	HWD	452,998
2. Mary Lou Alvarado	IMK/Naples	321,907
3. Verna Billie	HWD	281,637

Female 61+	REZ	STEPS
1. Shirley Clay	HWD	1,146,605
2. Connie Slavik	IMK/Naples	494,347
3. Dorothy Tommie	HWD	337,927

Male 18-24	REZ	STEPS
1. Chayse Billie	HWD	381,355
2. N/A		
3. N/A		

Male 25-30	REZ	STEPS
1. Michael J Shaffer II	IMK/Naples	544,623
2. Peter Foret	BRT/Tampa	322,756
3. Taylor Osceola	HWD	290,100

Male 31-35	REZ	STEPS
1. Lee Stewart	HWD	1,007,044
2. Gregory Osceola	HWD	497,651
3. Joseph Hughes	HWD	380,849

Male 36-40	REZ	STEPS
1. Clinton Billie	BC	497,309
2. Michael Cantu	HWD	216,637
3. NA		

Male 41-45	REZ	STEPS
1. Patrick Doctor Jr	HWD	324,131
2. Nupa Two Shoes	HWD	274,361
3. Douglas Zepeda	BC	194,384

Male 46-50	REZ	STEPS
1. Brian Billie	BC	350,335
2. Gordon Wareham	HWD	312,272
3. Joel Frank	IMK/Naples	257,988

Male 51-55	REZ	STEPS
1. Ronnie Doctor	BRT/Tampa	618,363
2. Kenny Tommie	HWD	573,580
3. Raymond Garza Sr.	IMK/Naples	407,012

Male 56-60	REZ	STEPS
1. Joe Kippenberger	HWD	1,023,925
2. Charlie Tiger	HWD	265,534
3. NA		

Male 61+	REZ	STEPS
1. Patrick Doctor Sr.	HWD	696,741
2. Tamecia (Clarence) Motlow	BRT/Tampa	216,411
3. Amos Frank	HWD	167,383

Wheelchair	REZ	STEPS
1. Maxine Tucker / Mark Jock	IMK/Naples	492,608

**TEAM With MOST PARTICIPANTS TROPHY WINNER**

1. HOLLYWOOD
2. BRIGHTON/TAMPA
3. IMMOKALEE/NAPLES
4. BIG CYPRESS

**TEAM WITH HIGHEST AVERAGE STEPS TROPHY WINNER:**

1. HOLLYWOOD
2. IMMOKALEE/NAPLES
3. BIG CYPRESS
4. BRIGHTON/TAMPA

# Seminoles fill the rosters, coaching ranks for Moore Haven High School softball

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**MOORE HAVEN** — It's not hard to find tribal representation this year on the softball field at Moore Haven High School.

Led by first-year varsity head coach Jaryaca Baker, first-year JV head coach Dallas Nunez and his daughters Brianna and Janessa, who are assistant coaches, the Terriers' program is filled with Seminole players in the coaching staffs and throughout the rosters. Baker's sister plays, as does another daughter of Nunez. They are among the nine players from the tribe.

"Having an all-tribal staff and a good number of tribal athletes to me is humbling," Baker said. "From personal experiences and obstacles I faced growing up, I feel like young tribal athletes seeing us out there bring them out because they can be comfortable and feel the same level of equality."

Moore Haven has generated plenty of success in recent years, including multiple trips to the state final four, even reaching the championship game in 2014. Those squads were loaded with experience from juniors and seniors; in contrast, this season's varsity team features an abundance of younger players.

"My goal for the team is to build this year. Find everyone's weaknesses and build it up," Baker said. "We have an extremely young team this year, so building is important. They all have the heart and the talent; we just have minor things to fix."

Among those young players from the tribe are third baseman Summer Gopher and Jaryaca's sister Preslynn Baker. Despite being an eighth grader playing against girls four or five years older than her, Preslynn was a standout in the team's first victory. She went 3-for-4 and was the winning pitcher as the Terriers defeated Gateway Charter-Fort Myers, 12-8, on Feb. 23. Other tribal members shined, too, in the victory.

"Illa Trueblood was a pinch runner for our pitcher/catcher and she is phenomenal on the bases," coach Baker said. "Our babies of the team — Tehya Nunez and Jolene Nunez — really stepped up when we needed them. Tehya played amazing at second base and she's only in sixth grade. Seventh grader Aaryn King also had a good couple at bats."

Some of those young players will spend a majority of time on the JV this year, but will get a taste of varsity. Also, some of those players would normally be playing for Pemaquid Emahavk Charter School, but are suiting up as Terriers because sports at PECS have yet to be played this academic year due to the pandemic.

The JV team's potential was evident in its first game of the season as it roared to an 8-3 lead against Clewiston on Feb. 19. That evening the team's batting order included Illa Trueblood (1st), Tehya Nunez (2nd), Jolene Nunez (4th), Tahniah Billie (6th), Aaliyah Billie (7th) and Jayleigh Braswell (9th).

Although Clewiston came back and won, Moore Haven provided a glimpse of burgeoning talent. Coach Nunez said his squad is essentially a middle school team playing on the JV level.

"We have to compete up, so it's only going to make them stronger in the end," he said. "They held their own. They did good. I was proud of them."



Moore Haven High School varsity softball player Preslynn Baker, an eighth-grader, fields a grounder at second base during the Terriers' home opener Feb. 19 against Clewiston.



In a junior varsity game, Moore Haven infielders Tehya Nunez, right, and Tahniah Billie try to nab a Clewiston runner at second base.



Moore Haven junior varsity pitcher Joleyn Nunez and first baseman Illa Trueblood face Clewiston in the team's first game Feb. 19.



Moore Haven High School varsity softball coach Jaryaca Baker talks to her infield during a trip to the pitcher's circle in the Terriers' game against Clewiston on Feb. 19.



Moore Haven High School junior varsity softball coach Dallas Nunez addresses his team during a break Feb. 19 in Moore Haven.

# Tennis stars coming to Hard Rock Stadium for Miami Open

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**MIAMI GARDENS** — The world's greatest tennis players will be at Hard Rock Stadium from March 22-April 4 for the Miami Open. Matches will be open to a limited number of fans.

The men's and women's draws feature the sport's top names, including Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic, Serena Williams and Naomi Osaka. Other players to watch include Australian Open finalist Jennifer Brady, 2019 Miami Open finalist Karolina Pliskova, World No. 4 and Pembroke Pines native Sofia Kenin, and American Madison Keys. Overall, each of the top

77 ranked men and 75 of the top 78 ranked women, have entered to compete in Miami.

Djokovic and Osaka recently won Australian Open titles.

Williams, a 23-time Grand Slam champion, is looking to capture her ninth title in Miami. World No. 1 Ashleigh Barty, the defending Miami Open champion, returns seeking to follow up her win in 2019.

Tournament officials said the stadium court inside Hard Rock Stadium will not be set up this year due to Covid-19 precautions.

For more information, including tickets, go to miamiopen.com.



Serena Williams